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AUG. №3
THE DEADLY
HANDS OF
KUNG FU

75¢

NO MAN CAN STAND AGAINST...

THE DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU

TM

IS JIM KELLY
THE NEW BRUCE LEE?

ACTION-STRIPS,
PHOTOS, and
FEATURES
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PLUS:
SHANG-CHI
MASTER OF
KUNG FU

MARVEL

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UNDER THE PAGODA

The Golden Gate of China

San Francisco, the city by the bay. Maybe those streets of milk and honey are a little soiled, maybe those golden gates are a little tarnished, but it's still a grand old town; with an even grander Chinatown!

Nearly two decades ago, Rogers and Hammerstein created their musical homage to Grant Avenue in the hit Broadway show *FLOWER DRUM SONG!* Things may have changed a lot since then, but Grant Avenue is still worth singing about! There is much to be fascinated with here—but, wait a moment! Isn't this column supposed to deal with Chinese theatres? Indeed it is, and in San Francisco's Chinatown you're sure to find your fill!

On Grant Avenue is the famous *Sun Sing* theatre, located on the block between Jackson and Pacific. This is a pleasant, reasonably clean theatre, quite popular, with traditional styling in its architecture.

There are also two theatres down on Jackson, on either side of Grant. One is the *Grandview*, which is a bit sleazier than most and which is given very little external upkeep. Still, it may prove worthwhile to check this place out, as they were playing unusual programs when I was there. The other theatre on Jackson is the *Great Star Theatre*, which gets my vote as the single best theatre in San Francisco's Chinatown. It's very clean, quite large, and plays a lot of coming attractions (don't knock it, I consider that a very important factor in judging a theatre).

On Kearny, one block over from Jackson is the *Bella Union*, a small theatre, though quite adequate. The thing I especially like about the *Bella Union* is the great variety of its programming, including Japanese Samurai films. Samurai films have never had the non-stop action of Kung Fu films, but they are excellent cinema. Surprise yourself—you may enjoy them.

Now move down all the way to the far end of Chinatown! At the corner of Powell and Columbus, across from Washington Park, we come to the *Palace* theatre. The unusual aspect of this theatre is that they don't play Kung Fu, or even oriental films, exclusively. But they do play a heavy schedule of films and they strive for variety. Speaking of variety, which seems to be a by-word here, we come to the *World*, on Broadway above Grant. As well as Kung Fu films, this theatre shows some of the more serious efforts of Chinese filmmakers, including occasional films from the People's Republic of China. If you're any sort of curious human being at all, these are certainly worth your attention.

Okay, we've identified some of the theatres you may want to check out in San Francisco's Chinatown. But what do you do while you're waiting for your show to begin? Well, if you're into window shopping, there are countless little shops that—behind the cheap curios and Bruce Lee posters—have many interesting things. Silks, Chinese weapons and, possibly, the most interesting,

intricate ivory carvings. If you have never seen the oriental ivory carvings before you are bound to be amazed! One almost gets eye-strain just looking... one hates to speculate the condition of the artist's eyes.

The two most "touristy" items around are probably the *Chinatown Wax Museum*, located at California St. and Grant Ave., and the China Cultural Center, located in a fairly new Holiday Inn at Kearny and Clay. "Touristy" or not, they are certainly worth taking in and are reasonably inexpensive.

If you're into food, well, people, you've come to the right place. Everything from the expensive, including the rooftop *Empress of China*, to quite good-but-inexpensive—little restaurants and tea shops. But you are by no means limited just to Chinatown, as there is much to recommend throughout the entire city of San Francisco when it comes to culinary considerations.

Or maybe you're just into looking at people—the men selling live clams on Grant Ave., people milling in and out of the countless shops, some smiling as you walk by. There's a lot to be found here at "China's Golden Gate"—I could fill this whole magazine with them. But it's so much better to discover them yourself!

Not sure what I'll have up for next time, but I'm planning a future edition on Japanese Samurai films! Stick with me people... we'll do it together! Happy viewing!

—J. DAVID WARNER
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.
2/5/74



THE BAY BREEZE IS STRONGER
HERE IN THE WATERFRONT
DISTRICT OF **SAN FRANCISCO**.

IN THE DISTANCE, FOGHORNS
SOUND THEIR LONELY MOANS, FAR-
OFF CRIES THAT SEEM TO **UNDER-**
SCORE THE SOLITARY FOOTSTEPS
OF THIS CHINESE YOUTH NAMED
LIN SUN...

...CRIES THAT ARE ABRUPTLY
DROWNED BY THE REVING OF
A SIX-CYLINDER ENGINE...

...A REVING THAT SIGNALS... **DEATH!**

BRRRUMM!

COME WITH US NOW TO A
WORLD THAT EXISTS WITHIN
OUR OWN, A WORLD OF
SUDDEN VIOLENCE--A
WORLD INHABITED
BY--

THE SONS OF THE **TIGER!**

CONWAY
SCRIPT
*
GIORDANO &
McLAUGHLIN
ART

THE **TRAIL OF THE NINJA!** VP



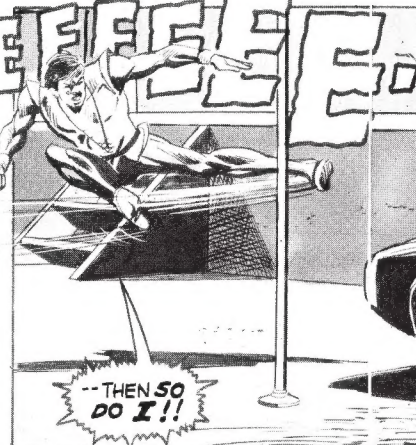
NO EXIT--
I'M IN A
DEAD
END--



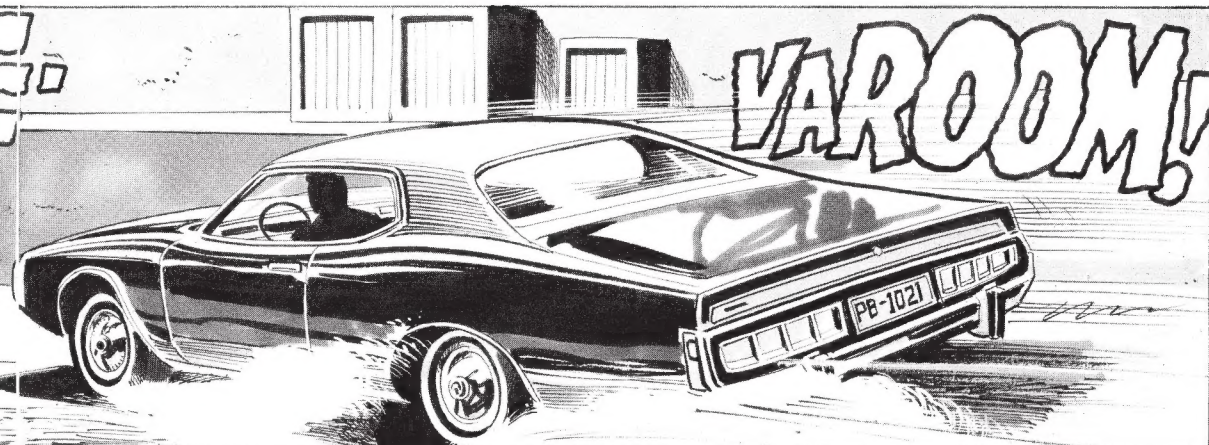
--AND THAT'S
WHAT I'LL BE IF
I DON'T MOVE
--DEAD!



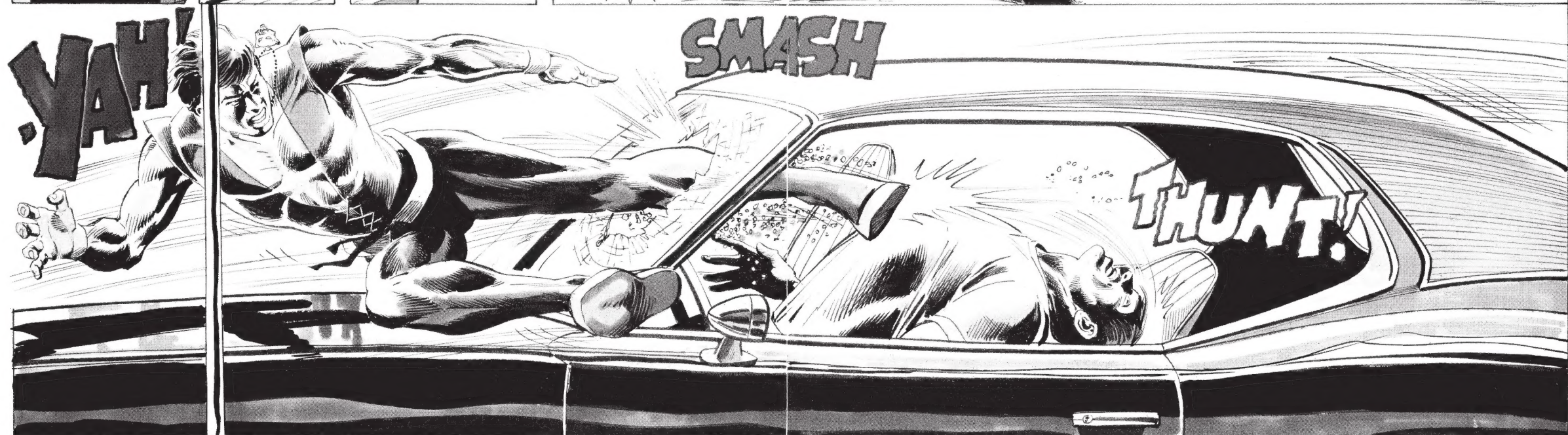
AND
SINCE THIS
AMBUSER MEANS
BUSINESS--



--THEN SO
DO I!!



VAROOM!



YAH!

SMASH

THUNT!



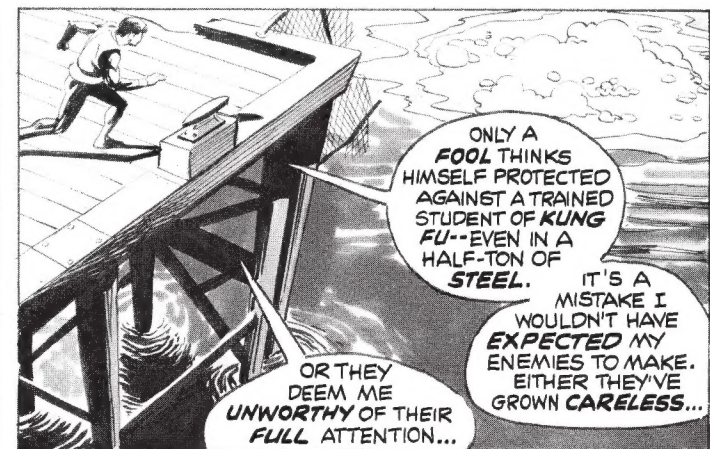
MASTER KEE
TAUGHT ME WELL
BEFORE HE WAS
KILLED...

IT'S A PITY THIS
ASSASSIN'S MASTER
DIDN'T TEACH HIM
EQUALLY WELL--

A PITY
FOR HIM,
NOT ME.



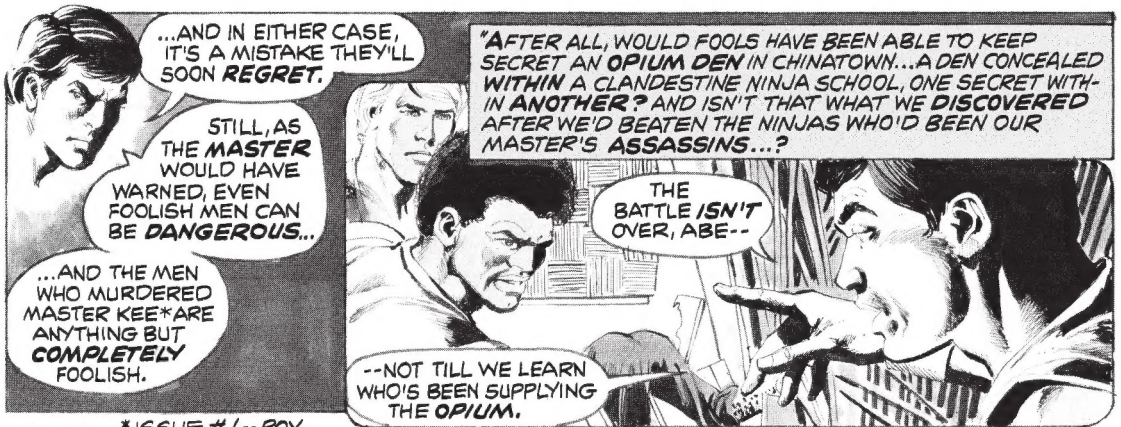
THAROOM!



ONLY A
FOOL THINKS
HIMSELF PROTECTED
AGAINST A TRAINED
STUDENT OF KUNG
FU--EVEN IN A
HALF-TON OF
STEEL.

IT'S A
MISTAKE I
WOULDN'T HAVE
EXPECTED MY
ENEMIES TO MAKE.
EITHER THEY'VE
GROWN CARELESS...

OR THEY
DEEM ME
UNWORTHY OF THEIR
FULL ATTENTION...



* ISSUE #1--ROY.



JANTO. JANTO IMPORTS. THEY HAVE A **WAREHOUSE** IN THE WATERFRONT DISTRICT.

ACCORDING TO WHAT I'VE HEARD IN CHINATOWN, THEY SELL **TOURIST JUNK** MOSTLY -- PERHAPS **OTHER THINGS**, AS WELL.

PERHAPS WE SHOULD PAY THEM A **VISIT** AND SEE--

HOLD IT, LIN. "WE?"

AREN'T YOU **FORGETTING**--? BOB AND I AGREED TO HELP STOMP THE DUDES WHO WASTED MASTER KEE...AND WE'VE **DONE THAT**.

TRACKING DOWN DOPE-DEALERS IS A LITTLE OUT OF OUR LINE, KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

ABE'S **RIGHT**. I'M AN ACTOR, NOT A **NARC**.

I GUESS YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN.

SO IT SEEMS, BOB. SO IT SEEMS.

"I FELT NO ANGER, ONLY **SADNESS**. SADNESS THAT THE TEAM WAS DISBANDED...SO SOON."

AND WHAT OF THE OTHER MEMBERS OF LIN'S "TEAM"?

WHAT OF THEIR THOUGHTS, AFTER THE CLIMATIC BATTLE IN THE NINJA SCHOOL...?

WHEN LIN LEFT TO VISIT THE JANTO WAREHOUSE, ABE BROWN TURNED HIS FEET TOWARD THE DARK STREETS OF FRISCO'S BLACK SLUM....

...WHERE HE FOUND HIMSELF ON THE ROAD TO HIS OWN PRIVATE "DAMASCUS"...

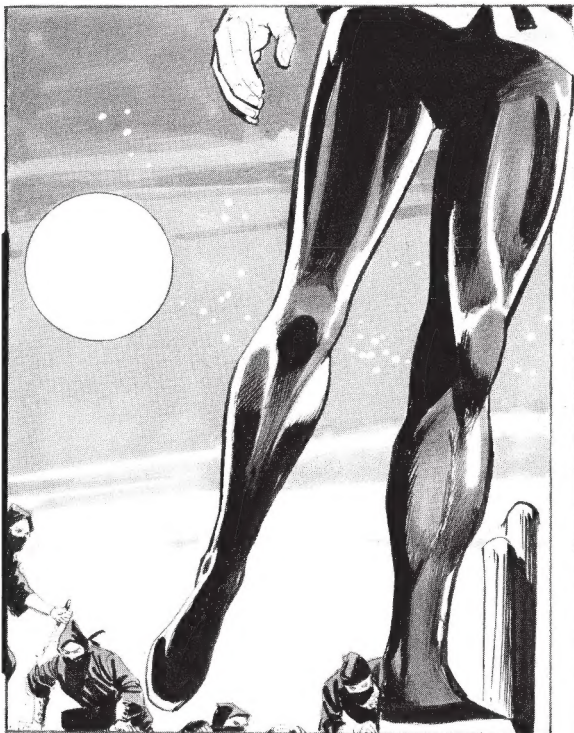
IT HAPPENS SUDDENLY, AS SUDDENLY AS A SUMMER FIRE IN AN ANCIENT TENEMENT..

..AS SUDDENLY AS A SPONTANEOUS REFLEXIVE RESCUE OF A FALLING CHILD--

--AS SUDDENLY AS THE INNER REALIZATION THAT RESPONSIBILITY DOESN'T END WITH ONE INDIVIDUAL ACT--

--BUT CONTINUES --TILL THE DAY A MAN DIES.

THAT'S HOW LONG IT TAKES FOR ABE BROWN TO MAKE HIS DECISION...

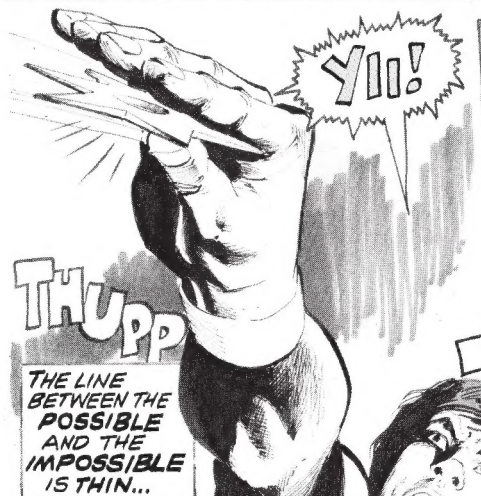




--AND THIS SON
OF THE TIGER
MOVES!

WII-

SWIIT!



YII!

THUPP

THE LINE
BETWEEN THE
POSSIBLE
AND THE
IMPOSSIBLE
IS THIN...



FOR SOME MEN THE LINE
IS IMMUTABLE.

FOR OTHER
MEN--IT
BENDS.

CHUNNK



FOR HIM--
THE LINE
DOES NOT
EXIST.

LIN SUN
IS SUCH
A MAN.



WAK!

I AM READY,
ASSASSINS. PRAY YOUR
MASTER TRAINED
YOU WELL

MY MASTER
DID.

SILENTLY, THE NINJAS SWOOP
FORWARD FOR THE KILL...
AND EXACTLY ONE SECOND
PASSES, AS LIN
SUN HESITATES,
MOMENTARILY
UNSURE...

THEN, THE
HESITATION
VANISHES...

... AND WITH THE SWIFTNESS
OF A FELINE, THE YOUTH
ATTACKS.

KRAK

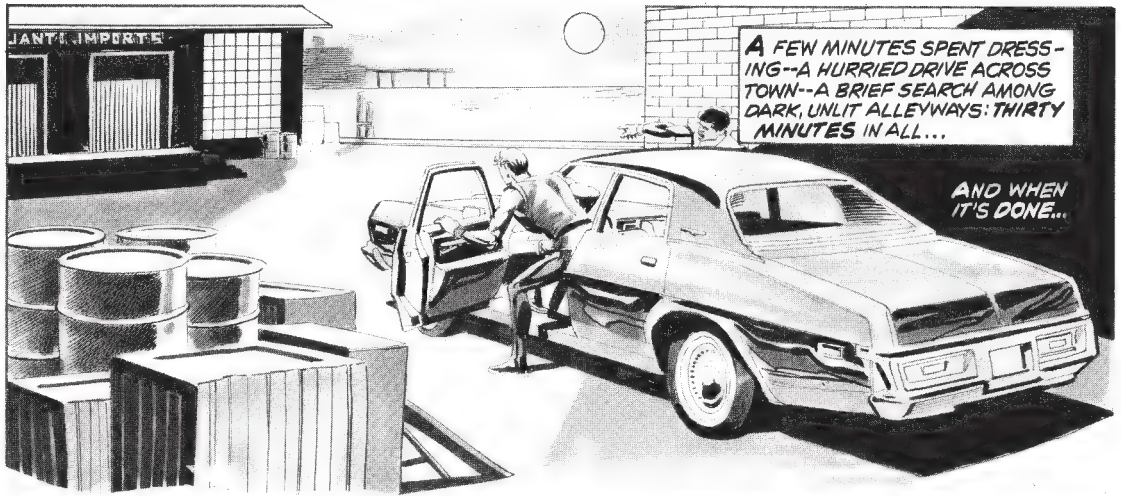
WHOK!

CABUNT!









A FEW MINUTES SPENT DRESS-
ING--A HURRIED DRIVE ACROSS
TOWN--A BRIEF SEARCH AMONG
DARK, UNLIT ALLEYS: THIRTY
MINUTES IN ALL...

AND WHEN
IT'S DONE...



...THE TWO FRIENDS WONDER
IF IT WAS DONE IN TIME...

...OR IF THEY
ARE ALREADY
MUCH TOO
LATE!

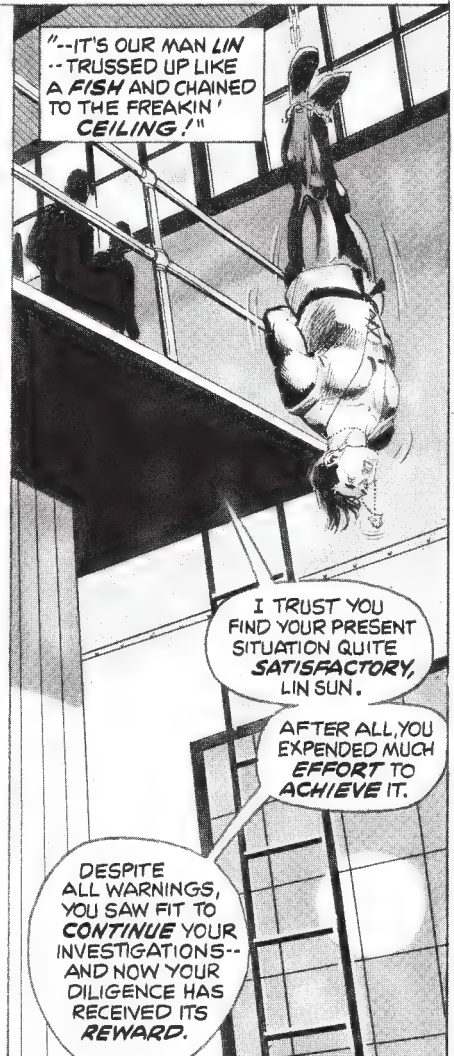


WINDOWS
ALL LIGHTED--LOOKS
THEY'RE HAVING A
PARTY IN THERE.

CAN YOU
MAKE OUT
ANYTHING,
ABE?

I'LL SAY
I CAN.

UP NEAR
THE RAFTERS--
ABOUT A HUNDRED
FEET OVER THE
FLOOR--

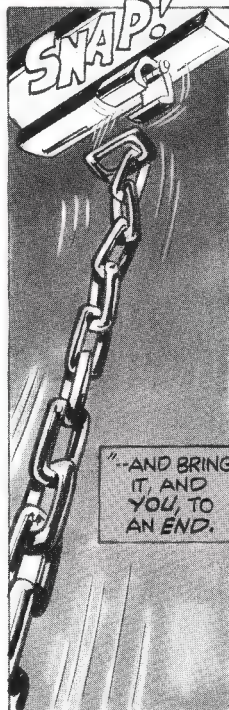
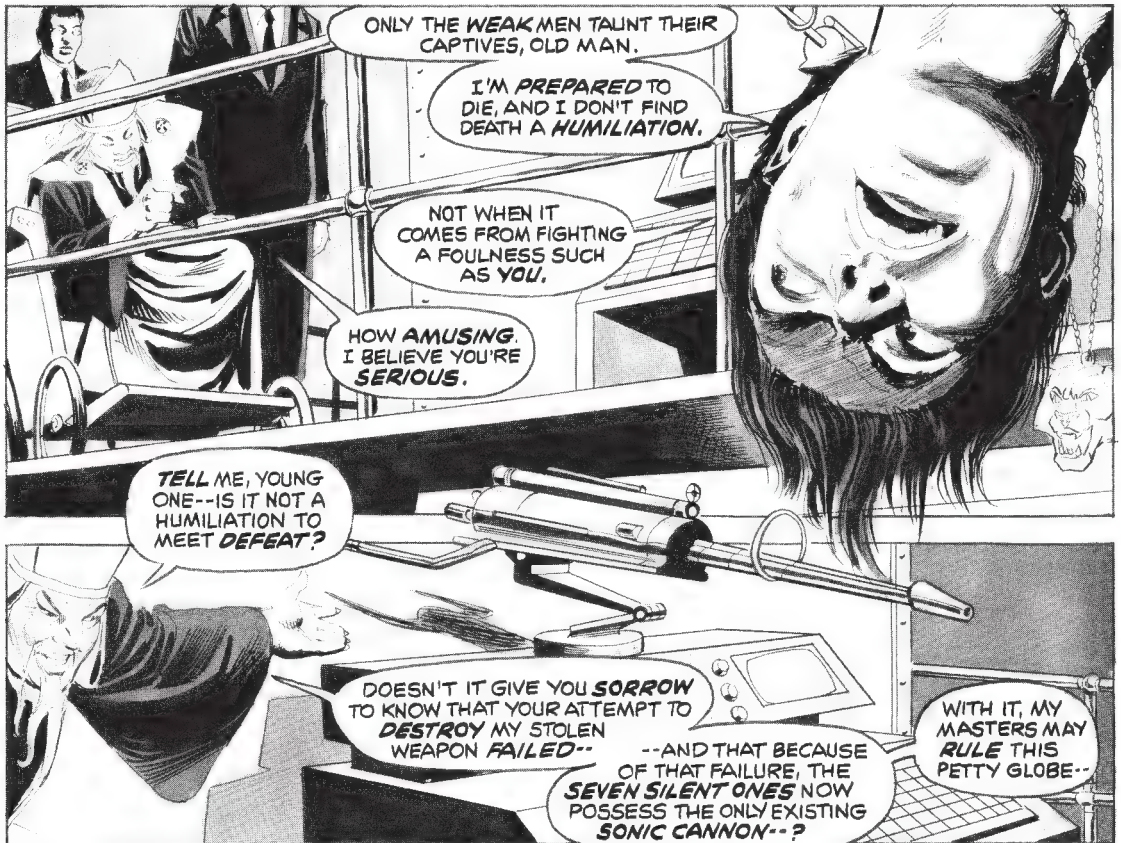


"--IT'S OUR MAN LIN
--TRUSSSED UP LIKE
A FISH AND CHAINED
TO THE FREAKIN'
CEILING!"

I TRUST YOU
FIND YOUR PRESENT
SITUATION QUITE
SATISFACTORY,
LIN SUN.

AFTER ALL, YOU
EXPENDED MUCH
EFFORT TO
ACHIEVE IT.

DESPITE
ALL WARNINGS,
YOU SAW FIT TO
CONTINUE YOUR
INVESTIGATIONS--
AND NOW YOUR
DILIGENCE HAS
RECEIVED ITS
REWARD.







STOP THEM! DESTROY THEM!

DON'T LET THEM
LEAVE HERE
ALIVE!

SAY, LIN--
THAT BOY
DOESN'T LIKE
US MUCH,
DOES HE?



WHY SHOULD
HE? HE'S AN
AGENT OF THE
SEVEN SILENT
ONES--

--THE MAN
DIRECTLY
RESPONSIBLE
FOR MASTER
KEE'S DEATH!

SPAK!

HE'S STOLEN
SOME SORT OF
WEAPON--

BUNT!



--WHICH WE BETTER STEAL
BACK! I'M READIN' YOU, BROTHER.

AND DON'T WORRY,
NONE...THESE PUNKS ARE
ABOUT AS MUCH TROUBLE
AS MY DEAR OLD
GRANNY, AND AS
FAR AS THAT
WEAPON OF
HIS GOES, I
DON'T CARE
SH--

BOCH!

GRUD!



EEEYOOW!

EEEEEEEEEEEEEE

THAT
SOUND--
WHAT
IS IT?

IT'S LO CHIN!
HE SAID THAT THING
WAS A SONIC
CANNON--

NOW HE'S GOING TO
PROVE IT--BY BLASTING
OUR BRAINS OUT!

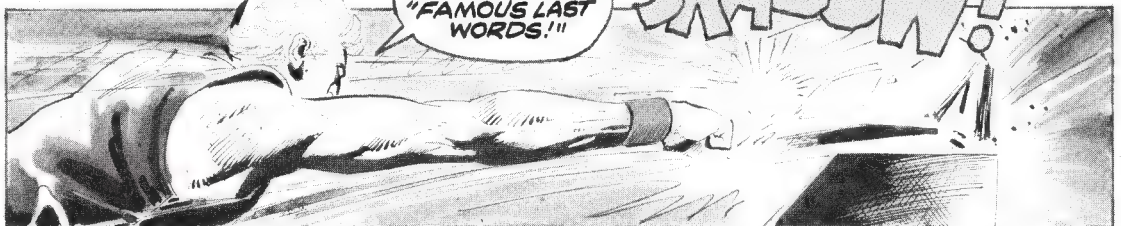


NOT IF I
CAN HELP IT,
LIN--AND I
CAN!

THE THIRD
SON! I'D FORGOTTEN
YOUR PRESENCE! YOU CAN'T
DO THIS--THE CANNON IS
TOO DELICATE! YOU
CAN'T--!

BUSTER,
THAT SOUNDS
A LOT LIKE
"FAMOUS LAST
WORDS!"

SRABOW!



CAN YOU
BEAT THAT?
THE CANNON
EXPLODED
--ALMOST
BRAINED
ME!

THE OLD
GEEZER SAID
IT WAS DELICATE,
BOB--YA SHOULD
HAVE LISTENED.

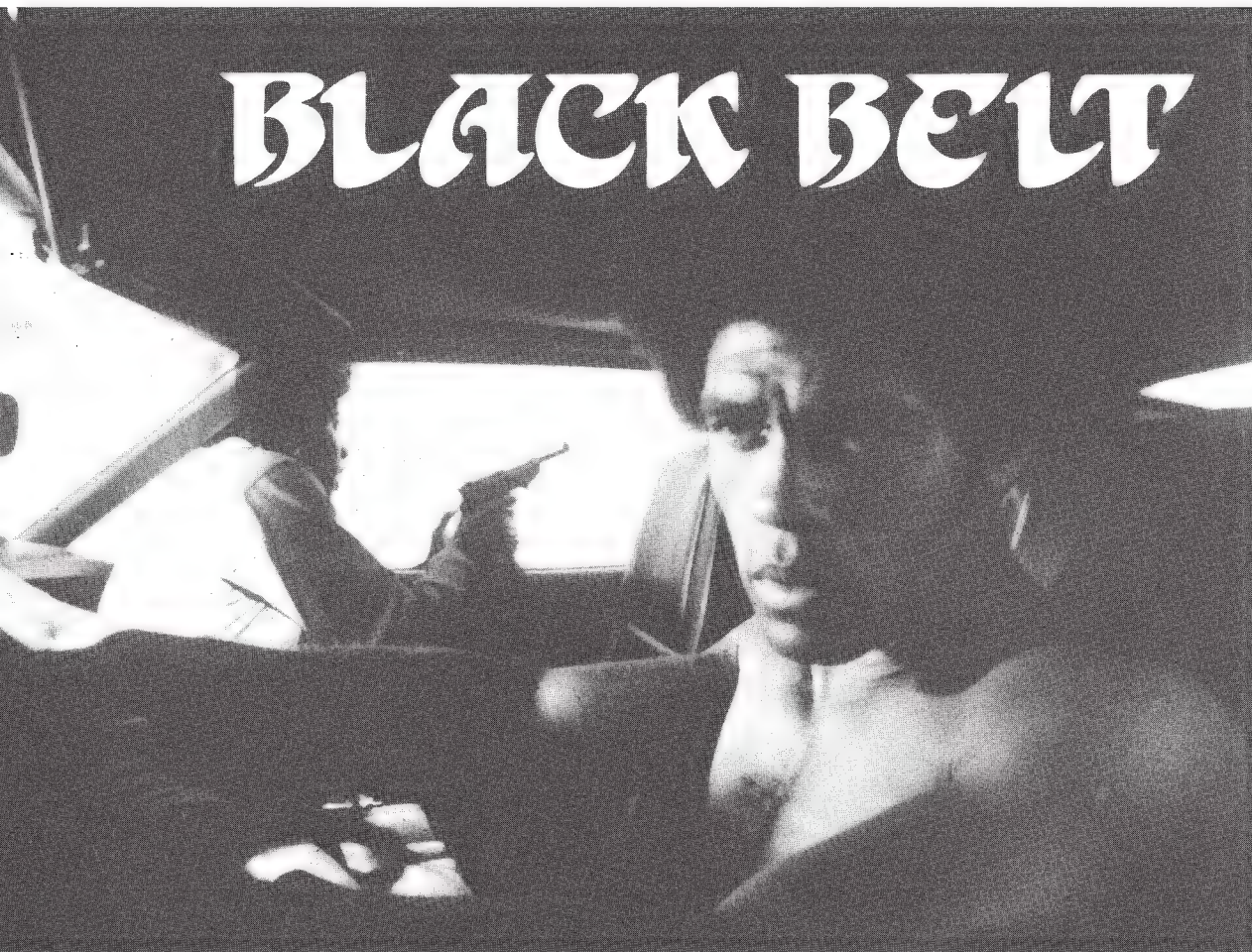
AT LAST,
IT'S OVER!

WITH LO
CHIN CAPTURED
WE CAN LEARN
THE WHEREABOUTS
OF THE SEVEN--
AND OUR SEARCH
IS AT AN
END.

ON THE
CONTRARY,
TIGER BROTHER...
I'M AFRAID IT'S
ONLY JUST
BEGIN.

LO CHIN...GONE? A CRIPPLE ABROAD WITHOUT HIS WHEELCHAIR?
WE'LL CONTINUE OUR STORY NEXT ISSUE, FOR NOW, UNFORTUNATELY,
WE MUST TAKE OUR LEAVE, AND PAINFULLY ANNOUNCE...

BLACK BELT



Jim Kelly has risen from the grave! Flashback: in case you were unfortunate enough to have missed *ENTER THE DRAGON*, Jim Kelly played an international karate champion in that flick who cashes in his chips (bone chips, teeth chips, face chips—I don't have to tell you how violent these Kung Fu extravaganzas can get) on the island of the inscrutable, megalomaniac and downright unfriendly Han. Of course, Bruce Lee and John Saxon make Han pay for this and a host of other crimes, but that tale is best left to another article. Coincidentally enough, that article is even now being written by Don McGregor for this very magazine—how strange are the workings of Fate!

My only comment on *ENTER THE DRAGON* will be this: I would've much rather seen dull, uninteresting John Saxon chopped up into shark bait by Han than Kelly. Even in his all-too-few scenes, Kelly showed a great deal of *Personality*—that magic ingredient of the screen that can't be manufactured but that makes superstars of John Waynes and Liza Minellis. Evidently, someone at Warner also recognized this quality in Kelly and cast him in what seems to be the first in a series of screen thrillers starring the title character—*BLACK BELT JONES*.

Black Belt Jones is a kind of free lance mayhem

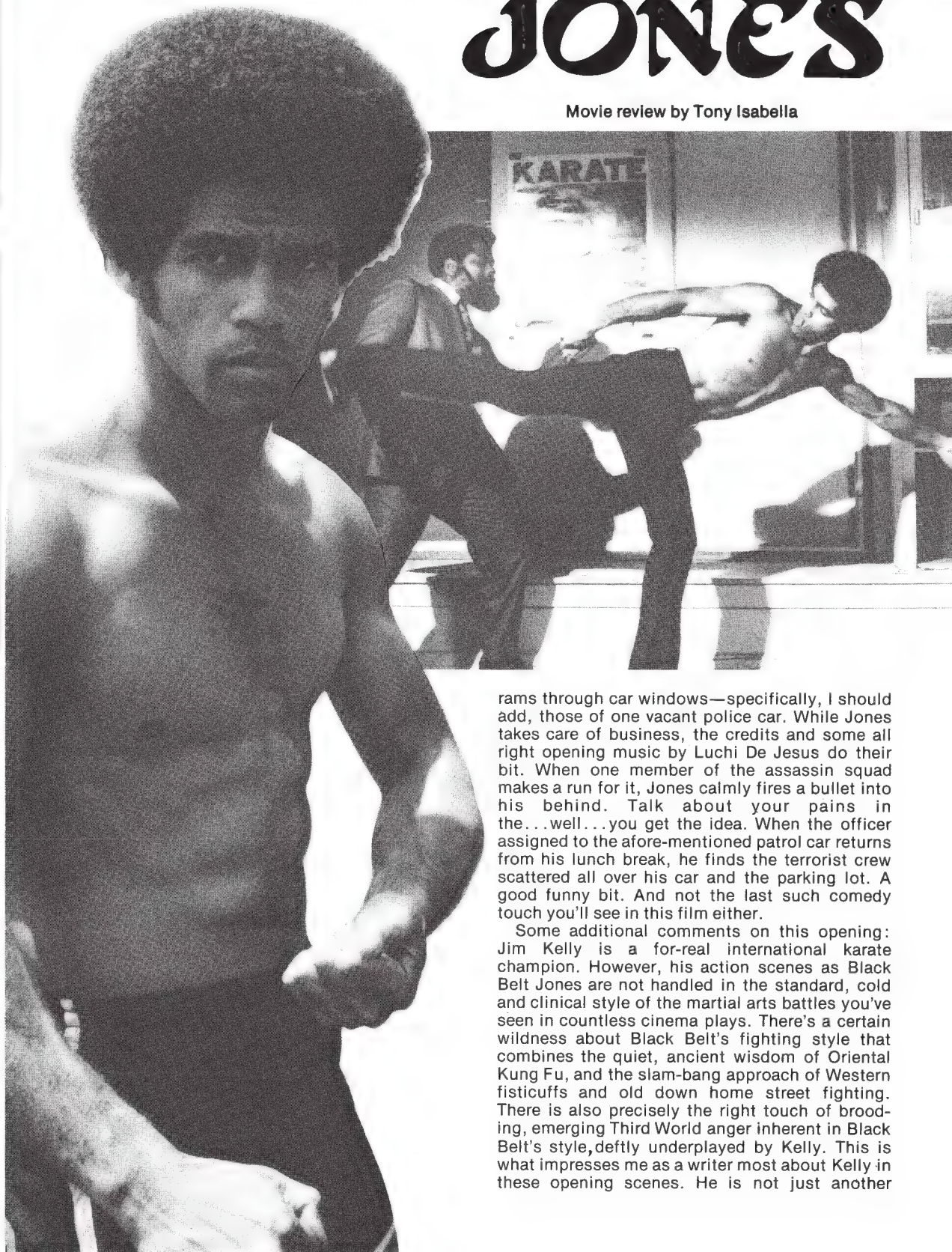
machine, working for an undefined government agency. The agency is roughly patterned after the F.B.I.—up to and including being too susceptible to corrupt political pressures. His sometimes boss, Roberts (played by Nate Esformes), is a pretty bland sort whose major reason for existence in this movie is to make Black Belt look good when standing next to the "System". You know the type. He assigns Jones to suicide missions. He complains when Jones comes up with some offbeat plan. When Jones is in trouble, he arrives with help just after the nick of time. U.N.C.L.E.'s Mr. Waverly would have groaned a lot watching this clown in action.

BLACK BELT JONES opens peacefully enough. A Roberts agent is executed in the vineyard/winery/headquarters of Mafia Don Steffano (Andre Phillippe) and his right hand gunman Big Tuna (Vincent Barbi) for attempting to steal photographs that could win the Don an all-expenses-paid vacation up the river. Meanwhile, in a TV show parking lot, a gang of terrorists attempt to assassinate a foreign ambassador. Enter: Black Belt Jones.

Jones doesn't just *foil* the assassination attempt. He *pulverizes* it. In this fast-moving fight scene, one actually loses count of how many terrorists Black Belt decks, throws over cars, or

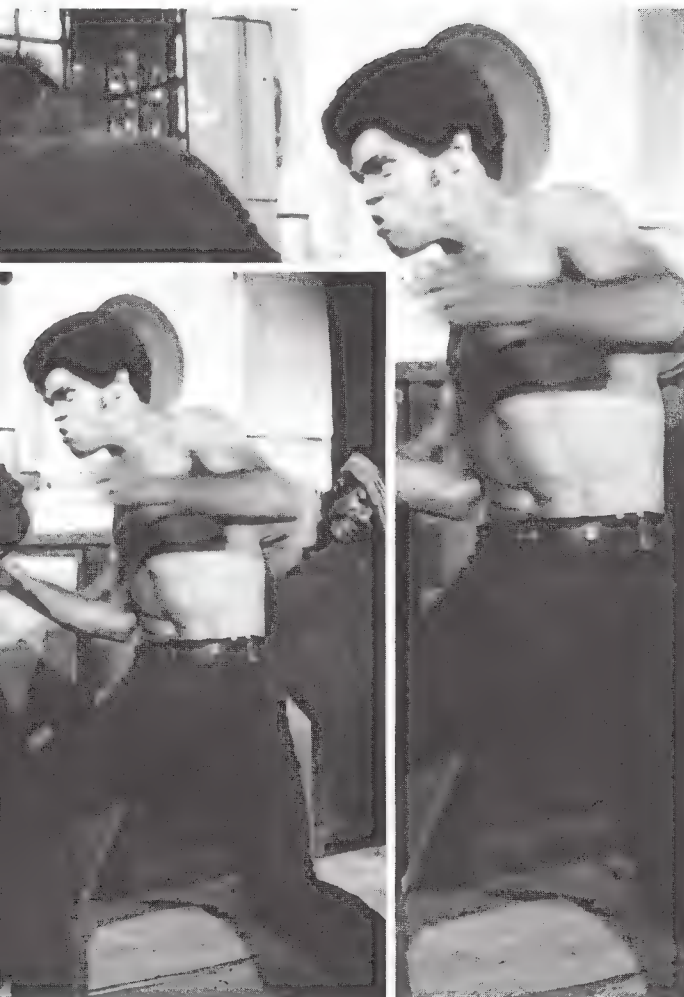
JONES

Movie review by Tony Isabella



rams through car windows—specifically, I should add, those of one vacant police car. While Jones takes care of business, the credits and some all right opening music by Luchi De Jesus do their bit. When one member of the assassin squad makes a run for it, Jones calmly fires a bullet into his behind. Talk about your pains in the...well...you get the idea. When the officer assigned to the afore-mentioned patrol car returns from his lunch break, he finds the terrorist crew scattered all over his car and the parking lot. A good funny bit. And not the last such comedy touch you'll see in this film either.

Some additional comments on this opening: Jim Kelly is a for-real international karate champion. However, his action scenes as Black Belt Jones are not handled in the standard, cold and clinical style of the martial arts battles you've seen in countless cinema plays. There's a certain wildness about Black Belt's fighting style that combines the quiet, ancient wisdom of Oriental Kung Fu, and the slam-bang approach of Western fisticuffs and old down home street fighting. There is also precisely the right touch of brooding, emerging Third World anger inherent in Black Belt's style, deftly underplayed by Kelly. This is what impresses me as a writer most about Kelly in these opening scenes. He is not just another



mindless athlete jumping to a fight choreographer's shouted command. He's an actor—and a damn good one. In less than ten minutes of screen time, and while Kung Fu-ing his way through several terrorists, Kelly reveals much about the character he plays.

Black Belt Jones is a concerned, intelligent man. His initial appearance in this film is in the audience of a news show about the problems of Latin American nations. Most Kung Fu heroes, provided they could find their way to a studio audience, would likely be dressed as a giant chicken screaming "Pick me, Monty! Pick me!" Jones is a thinking warrior.

Black Belt is also not just a mercenary. He is not on assignment when he saves the life of the ambassador, nor does he ask for any reward or even thanks for his heroic actions. But, when faced with a job for our government, which possesses a great wealth it often manages to spend in wrong or simply stupid ways, Jones asks for and most usually gets the high payment he feels the completed assignment is worth. And, when he turns down a mission—to invade the fortress-home of Don Steffano to get those same photographs a man was slain for—you don't believe for an instant that cowardice plays even an

infinitesimal part in his decision. It's simply smart thinking on Black Belt's side. Besides, by this time, you figure that if Roberts had offered Jones the equipment and manpower he would need to pull the caper off, Black Belt would have accepted. And succeeded.

Events draw Black Belt into opposing Don Steffano anyway, when the Mafia head learns the location of the new civic center planned by the city. The Don wants to buy up the property and thus make a killing when he sells it to the authorities. The key to his planned land purchase is a karate school run by Pop (Scatman Crothers). Black Belt is the school's official guardian angel. His influence made it possible for a compulsive gambler like Pop to get a government grant to operate the school. There's a switch for you, movie fans, a black belt hero with political pull.

'Enter the villain. Pinky (Malik Carter) is not a nice man at all. He pushes heroin from a basement pool hall. He sells out to the Mafia. He beats up on the college students who try to prevent him from selling his vile wares to the youth of the black community. And, occasionally, he kills people.

Malik Carter, on the other hand, is one heck of an actor, the kind of villain you can really snarl at.

He's a punk who's worked his way up via a goodly portion of boot-licking. He's a tyrant on his own turf, a kowtowel in the presence of the Don or Steffano's henchmen. He's really a miserable wretch and deserves to reappear soon. Perhaps in the next Black Belt Jones movie?

Pinky's been holding out some of the heroin profits on Steffano. The Don knows this. The knowledge is something he can use whenever Pinky gets out of line or has to be pressured. Steffano plays this ace and orders Pinky to get the karate school building. Any way he can. Pinky's holding an I.O.U. from Pop for \$1,000. A little deft penmanship and it becomes \$11,000.

When Pinky attempts to collect on this faked I.O.U., his gang is battered by Pop, his head instructor Toppy (Alan Weeks), junior student Quincy (Eric Laneuville) and the rest of the class. While Week's and Laneuville's roles are not particularly demanding, they carry them off well.

Pinky and Company return that night, hoping to find Pop alone. What they find is an alerted Black Belt Jones and a visually imaginative Kung Fu fight—the Battle of the 3-Second Light.

You see, while Toppy mans the light switch, Black Belt Jones blasts Pinky's mob to pieces. The lights go out. They go on about three seconds

later, but only for three seconds. That's time enough for Black Belt to strike, then hide in the darkness until the next seconds of light. Pinky and his men last about three minutes.

Again, Black Belt is a thinking warrior. He plans his fights well. While his fellow Kung Fu stars would be shouting war cries, Jones makes no boisterous display of lung power, only battle savvy. Pinky's no fool either, though. Seeing Black Belt in action makes him all the more cautious.

Pinky knows he'll be dead meat if he fails the Don. He calls in some out-of-town karate killers to force Pop to sell the school. Pop refuses, saying it's all he's got to leave to a mysterious Sydney. The muscle boys try beating him into submission, but instead they kill him.

A magnificent jazz funeral follows, with Pop's students paying their respects with traditional Kung Fu ceremony. This combining of two rich cultures is a semi-highlight of BLACK BELT JONES. The funeral also sets the stage for a dramatic revelation. Sydney is Pop's daughter.

Gloria Hendry is Sydney and she comes on screen with a verbal and physical bang. She says two things on her arrival. First, "I cried myself out on the plane, so don't expect any tears." Second,



Gloria Hendry is simply sensational. She's the perfect partner to Jim Kelly. She's fast on the verbal comeback, foxy, and an outstanding Kung Fu artist. The audience will love her a lot, as they did when she appeared opposite Roger Moore in the most recent James Bond movie, *LIVE AND LET DIE*.

Pinky gathers his out-of-town killers for another assault on the karate school, hoping to confront Sydney with the I.O.U.—now up to \$41,000. She's not there when he arrives, but the wily Pinky dreams up an alternate plan. He kidnaps Quincy. The terms of the lad's release? Black Belt must bring Pinky \$41,000, or a deed to the school building. Jones must come alone. If any police are spotted, Quincy dies.

Enter Mr. Roberts and the hatching of a two-way plan.

You remember bland Mr. Roberts, right? Well, he's spent most of the film learning what the Mafia already knew—the school is on some pretty valuable land. Black Belt figures that Pinky is after the place for Don Steffano. And the Don has this vault/vat in the winery which contains, in addition to the photos Mr. Bland is lusting for, a bundle of hot cash—money from crimes that's being stored until it's cool enough to spend. Roberts balks at Black Belt's plan for getting both, but agrees to it. The plan:

Raid the winery. Steal the photos and the money. Pay Pinky with the money. Sit back and watch as Pinky tries to pay the Don off—those

withheld profits, you know — with Steffano's own—in a manner of speaking—cash.

The makers of *BLACK BELT JONES* unfold this plan for all its worth. The espionage-type activities of Black Belt and a team of gymnasts who join him in the invasion of the Don's headquarters remind one of *Mission: Impossible*, without the mechanical doll aspect of the IMF's excursions. Black Belt's lone trek into Pinky's temporary digs—a deserted railroad yard—is reminiscent of a sheriff of the Old West going to face his foes without anybody to back his play. Finally, Jones' battle with Pinky's karate killers contains enough Kung Fu action to satisfy any martial arts freak. He meets them in a railroad car and the camera retreats to *outside* said car, where Pinky's men exit—one by one—in less-than-graceful demeanor. They are punched through the windows of the train and left hanging there like some hunter's grotesque trophies. Quincy is rescued by Sydney. Pinky escapes with the money. The whole scene *feels* like a climax. The only thing left is Pinky's being offed by the Mafia, right? Wrong!

It only *feels* like a climax. What looked like the film's end is only the beginning to an even more exciting wrap-up. You reach for your coat and

BLACK BELT JONES knocks you back into your seat. You see, Pinky isn't killed by the Don. He convinces Don Steffano that he was framed. Which means the Don, Pinky, and an assortment of hoods have to go after Black Belt and Sydney. Family honor and all that. There's a good car chase and a fantastic final winners-take-all karate battle. The battle takes place in a city parking lot filled with soap suds and sanitation trucks. No, don't ask me any questions. Just go see this movie.

The final chunk of celluloid chaos alone make the film worth even today's inflated prices. You'll *feel* these Kung Fu punches. You'll *wince* at the holds employed by Black Belt Jones and Sydney, *particularly* those used by the lady. It's a knock-down-drag-out I don't suggest you miss.

Jim Kelly is fantastic as Black Belt Jones. That's all there is to it. If Warner Brothers hasn't already planned a sequel, I'm afraid they're missing a bet. And, if they don't reunite him with Gloria Hendry, they'd be blowing a second wager. Because the team is dynamite. Their romance is a direct one, not at all maudlin in its development. They are equal partners in it, which is certainly more interesting than the hero/helpless heroine situations most seen on that much-maligned (perhaps rightfully so) silver screen.

Yes, Jim Kelly is back from the grave.

And, just between us, I'd lay odds Black Belt Jones could've mopped up that island with the inscrutable Han!



ANGELA MAO- A NEW SUPERSTAR RISES

by J. David Warner

The Chinese do have a star system within their film industry not dissimilar to the star systems of the once-great Hollywood Studios in the thirties and forties. They have their Humphrey Bogarts, their Errol Flynns, their Katharine Hepburns and Spencer Tracys, their Gary Coopers and their Olivia DeHavillands. And you can bet that these Chinese superstars are quite well off.

Since the popularity of Martial Arts films began in this country around April of 1973, we have not had enough exposure to most of these stars for them to arise as superstars here. But two in particular have emerged as definite box office successes—Bruce Lee, of whom we've already written about at great length, and Angela Mao, whom this article is about.

Angela Mao can deceive you. When she first walks out onto the screen, she appears slight, with an innocent, vulnerable smile that makes you think "My gosh, can this be the tigress they advertised on the poster?" Oh, yes, indeed it is. The villains appear, and she becomes angry—steely-eyed angry—tensing every muscle, every fibre of her being. Her teeth clench. She cries out and suddenly she's on top of you with those deadly feet of hers. Even that pigtail, which adds to the overall schoolgirl-innocence effect becomes a deadly weapon.

Her style is curious. . . you may notice that she uses her feet much more than almost anyone in any of the other Kung Fu films. Her particular style is called, according to my sources, *Hapkido*.

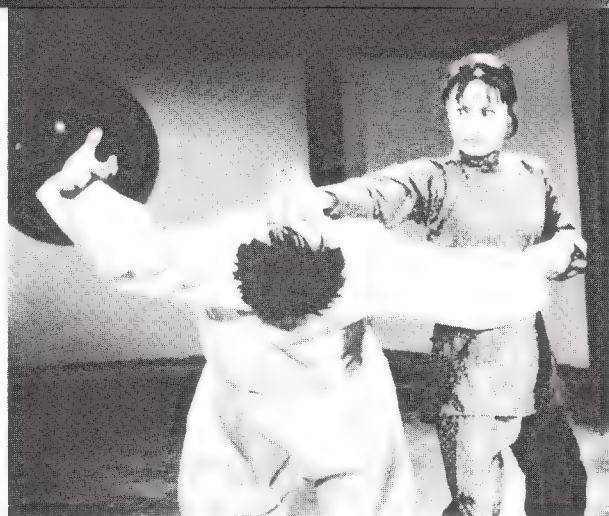
Hapkido is a special system of Kung Fu utilizing the feet, and it is incredibly effective considering the distance ratio between arms-length and legs-length. Angela knows her art well and practices it on screen with a ballet smoothness and gunshot accuracy. And yet, with all her deadly fighting skill, she carries the airs and sensitivities of an actress, at least as much as the Hong Kong product allows her.

In this respect she has proven herself. Go down to Chinatown sometime and check out the Chinese magazine stores. You'll find her face plastered across countless movie fan publications, appealing to the same kind of fandom that stars in this country used to enjoy. And it's beginning to happen in another way over here. In the third issue of *Fighting Stars* magazine—a publication devoted to celebrities who practice martial arts—they've already had a thirteen year old write in, demanding an article dealing with his favorite "heroine"—*Angela Mao!*

DEEP THRUST

Wasn't that about Miss Lovelace
and her dislocated . . . ?

The first of Angela Mao's films to be released and dubbed in the United States was "DEEP THRUST." American International, the production





company responsible for the film's release, was obviously cashing in on the then popular and controversial porno film "DEEP THROAT," which had been banned just weeks before in New York. This reflects the whole attitude of most producers in promoting Miss Mao's films in this country. That attitude is, to be blunt but accurate, exploitatively sexist. For example, the posters will show her giving a kick in the top part of her uniform, which comes down into a very mini skirt. In actuality she wears special pants under that top, resulting in her being discreetly covered from neck to toe, in the grandest tradition of the chaste heroes of a bygone Saturday afternoon era.

But now back to "DEEP THRUST."

I enjoyed this film. Some of my friends who enjoy such films did not. I suppose that is to be expected. Still, their reason (usually the same one) is valid and, to get the bad news out of the way, I shall take that up first.

The fights in this film are just plain badly choreographed, with punches seen to stop full inches away from their intended targets. That—coupled with an excess of breakaway furniture (by that I mean furniture you could spot as breakaway before they broke it) and overdoing those impossible leaps—kept the action from being as exciting as it could have been. Still that is not to

say this film isn't exciting. It is—very exciting—complete with an interesting sub-plot to maintain suspense.

Here's the story in a nutshell. A young warrior is nearly killed trying to defeat the local villains, who run gambling and drug operations. Two years later he reappears, a much stronger and better fighter. He was saved by a young mountain farm-girl who has now fallen in love with the young warrior. He has sworn to return to her when he defeats the villains. But now a shadow falls across his trail—that shadow is Angela Mao.

Angela is out to avenge her sister whom the young warrior once had an affair with. When the warrior left her, the sister died. Now Angela wants to have it out with him. He begs her to wait until he can defeat the villains and promises to honor her challenge. Reluctantly, obviously very intolerant of men, she agrees and ends up helping him against the villains (if only to save his hide for her).

Of course, she never does get around to exacting her revenge, but neither does she bend much in her intolerance of him. He just smiles as she leaves him and his love with a big *harumph*; you can almost imagine a tight-lipped Barbara Stanwyck (whom, incidentally, I consider a magnificent lady) doing the stomping away.

Here, at least, are well-sustained fights, if not well-choreographed ones; action galore for everyone. And Angela Mao is in the middle of it. Also noteworthy—although I'm supposed to stick to the subject of Angela Mao—is the use of outdoor location photography which, with the lower quality film that they use, always seems to work better on the color print.

Angela Mao, more noticeably than other recurring actors in these films, is rarely dubbed in

the same voice from film to film and this one has her shouting out curses in a high-pitched but definitely no-nonsense voice that seems to fit the part, even if the dialogue (or at least the *dubbed* dialogue) is the usual unnoteworthy trash.

HAVEN'T WE BEEN HERE BEFORE...?

I've got only two really kind things to say about National General's release of "LADY KUNG FU". First, the stunts and fights were mostly good to excellent and, two, the film stars Angela Mao. On the surface that may seem pretty good recommendations, but all is not here as it appears to be.

Angela Mao is good. If I haven't stated it before, she is one of those people who, by presence alone, makes a film worth seeing. In this film she plays the role of "Mary-sweet-innocence" with what *Cue Magazine* in New York so aptly described as an "itty bitty dubbed voice." Most times it is barely audible. But when she finally gets angry at the Japanese and lashes out—well that's a different story. She lashes out with hands, those incredible feet and that oh-so-deadly pigtail that thrashes about like a short bullwhip, leaving bloody lacerations on her opponents.

Unfortunately, Angela Mao's ability to carry a film is threatened by an overpowering feeling of *Deja vu*. Now, I'm not trying to suggest there are never any similarities amongst these films. Most of them are quite predictable, with only certain variations. Be that as it may, this still gives one the feeling of having seen it before on the first showing—as a matter of fact, it really felt like the third time I had seen it, and I think that's what made the feeling sink in.

The fights are good to excellent, especially on the part of Angela and one of her partners. But the





fight were not always well sustained and there's one fight I found personally offensive. I should reveal here that I am a Samurai freak. In one fight, one of Angela's partners is cut over and over with a Samurai blade, but he walks away from the fight. Bloody true, but he walks away just the same. No way, buddy, no way! Oh, where is Toshiro Mifune when we need him?

There's no use discussing the plot— you know it already. Some will like this film. I didn't; I liked Angela Mao. Case is closed!

FATHER KNOWS BEST... BUT DAUGHTER FIGHTS BETTER!

We're doing these out of order, but the last film I know of to be released with Angela Mao in it was distributed by MGM under the title of "DEADLY CHINA DOLL," and for that I ask we pause for a minute of silence...

The film is fun actually— as vacuous as the

worst of them, but entertaining; good fights and even slow motion so you can see what the people are doing.

A young troubleshooter drifts into a village and befriends a tea house owner and his sweet young daughter, Angela Mao—again doing her "Mary-sweet innocence" act, only doublefold. The young troubleshooter is actually there to stop a Japanese opium shipment from coming through, but it isn't long before Angela and her father get into the act. It's really almost amusing, a sort of Walt Disney Kung Fu film, as the father leads his daughter about and she simply batters any unfortunate villains out of their way. She never quite works herself up into one of her usual characteristic mads, remaining less frenetic than usual.

Aside from a completely ridiculous battle between a Chinese Baby Huey and Angela Mao, the fights were good to exquisite and, as I mentioned earlier, I enjoyed some of the slow motion stuff that lets you see exactly what the fights are all about.

Nothing to cheer about, but "DEADLY CHINA DOLL" is good fun for all, even without the added bonus of Angela.

RE-ENTER THE DRAGON... AGAIN!

"ENTER THE DRAGON" has certainly received enough write-ups to fill the *Sunday New York Times*, but there is one scene that is often passed over and it is in this scene that Angela Mao makes her brief but nonetheless memorable appearance.

Angela Mao plays Bruce Lee's sister, being pursued by henchmen of the evil Han across the back alleys of a Hong Kong waterfront. Never have I seen martial arts choreographed so much like a ballet. And never has Angela had quite such a chance to really and truly act. And act she does. Her role is entirely nonspeaking (well, almost), but the desperation sweats across her brow and steels in her eye. Finally she is trapped in an old shed. There is a resounding finality to the scene, even before you realize what she will do with that piece of jagged, broken glass she has picked up. But her face, again, tells it all. The pride and the fire in that face tells you that she has chosen death over even allowing these jackals to touch her. And she does. And the only thing that allows you to keep your cool is knowing that Bruce Lee is coming to avenge her!

There you have it— Angela Mao, impressions of her and her films as they have been released in this country, filtered through the mind and opinions of a slightly adoring critic. If you discover Angela Mao and find yourself in the same position, then see all the films mentioned. If she doesn't really "do it to you", you may want to give "LADY KUNG FU" and "DEADLY CHINA DOLL" a miss. But you may surprise yourself... and you may find yourself musing from time to time: "As long as they had to find a replacement for Mrs. Emma Peel..."

Good fortune on your celluloid journey...



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 GABRIEL, DEVIL-HUNTER!
 LILITH! KA-ZAR!

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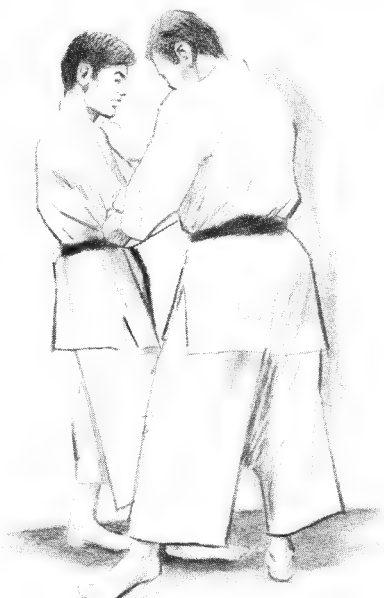
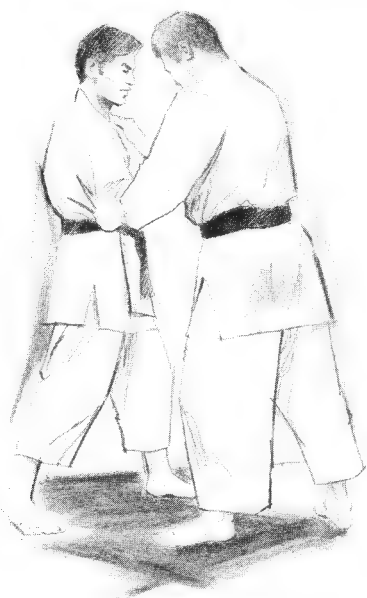
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SWEEP YOUR WAY TO VICTORY:

by Frank McLaughlin
Head Instructor—Westport, Conn. YMCA



In this age of power judo, it's an absolute joy to watch a small, fast *judoka* execute a foot sweep on a bigger, stronger opponent. In the twinkling of an eye, the true spirit of judo manifests itself as the larger man is swept effortlessly to the mat. At the first sight of daylight between his opponent's foot and the mat, our hero has reacted instinctively with the most beautiful of all techniques, *deashi harai* (advanced foot sweep).



Deashi Herai

(Advanced Foot Sweep)

What is the secret . . . where does the magic lie in a throw made to look so easy by this master?

First, let's take it from the beginning and discuss the movements involved. The single most important factor to consider is the *timing*. The throw simply will not work unless your attack takes place at a precise instant. It all happens so fast that you must anticipate your opponent's foot movements in advance.

The grip I prefer to use is a *double-elbow grip*, instead of the more common lapel-elbow grip. This way I can sweep to either side without first changing my grip. As your opponent moves toward you with his left foot advanced, he is about to take a step forward with his right foot thus shifting his body weight from his rear (left) foot to his front (right) foot. The time to attack with the foot sweep is now—just as he is about to plant all his weight onto his front foot. As he does this, you simply sweep this supporting foot from underneath him a split second before he can place it on the mat. If you attack too soon, you will fail—because he has not yet shifted his weight from rear foot to front foot. Striking too late won't work either, because his foot will be firmly planted on the mat. The transfer of weight from rear to front has already been completed.

Before practicing this throw, you must develop a certain *rhythm* with your partner first. As you face him, assume mutual grips on each other. As he steps forward with his right foot, you step back with your left foot. He steps forward with his left foot, you step backward with your right foot—at exactly the same time. As he begins to advance his right foot to take his next step to the front, you begin to move your left foot to your rear, but a bit slower than before. As his right foot nears your left foot, he begins to shift his body weight down onto his right foot. Your knees should bow slightly as you *place the sole* of your left foot against the outside of his right ankle. With a left to right sweeping motion, continue to follow through and, at the same time, pull *down* on his sleeve with your *left* hand and *up* on his *other* sleeve with



your *right* hand. This motion of the hands is very similar to that of swerving the steering wheel of a car hard to the left. It must be perfectly synchronized with the sweeping action of the foot. Protect your partner by pulling up on his sleeve with your left hand as he takes his breakfall with his left arm.

This throw should be done as a "dry run" many times first before actually performing the throw. Work hard at synchronizing your movements to your partners until you "mirror" your foot movements to his.

As you go through these moves, you'll probably realize that your partner can shift his weight to his front foot much quicker than you can sweep it. The key to success here is to keep your left foot near his right foot just before you sweep. Most beginners "telegraph" their intent by lifting their attacking foot off the mat and pulling it to the left before sweeping to the right. The sweep is performed at the *surface* of the mat.



RIGHT: As your opponent shifts his weight onto his front foot, you place the sole of your foot and sweep. Remember to pull up on his sleeve with your left hand as he takes his fall.



WRONG: Here the side of the foot is striking, rather than the sole of the foot sweeping. This can cause injury to yourself or your opponent.



The hand movements are the same as those of a panic-stricken driver who suddenly swerves his car hard to the left. This movement is done as the left foot sweeps to the right and follows through after the throw.

Just as if you were cupping your hand and sweeping crumbs off the mat, the *sole* of the foot sweeps the surface of the mat. It is most important not to kick. *Sweep!* Failure to use the *sole* of the foot may result in injury. If the *side* of the foot is used to sweep your opponent's ankle, you are making bone-to-bone contact, a taboo in *all* phases of judo.

By reversing the whole procedure, you can perform the same throw on the other side, sweeping his left foot with your right foot.

Follow the directions slowly and carefully until your moves become sure and you can do them fluidly. When you assume the role of the opponent so your partner can practice the foot sweep, you may develop a tendency to take a "short step" when you know he is about to sweep that foot. Resist this urge and take a full, natural step forward in order for him to get his timing down.

Most importantly, don't get discouraged. This technique requires much finesse and that only happens when you fully understand the mechanics of the throw and practice it for many, many hours.

The essence of judo is fully embodied in this technique; the concept of *conquering by yielding* fully evident. Many powerful judo players underestimate the value of this type of throw only to become victims of smaller judoka. Don't make the same mistake.

Overpowering your opponent may work in the beginning stages of your judo training, but you will soon realize that the student who follows Kano's original concept of *conquering by yielding* will do just that in the long run.

Jigoro Kano's theory is often disregarded in tournament play, sometimes by leading players. A player who constantly experiments with new combination or counters may lose to a more conservative player who is more intent on winning than improving his development as a judoka. In the long run, a player with finesse will eventually overcome the player who relies on sheer power.

Throws like *deashi harai* that depend on skill and timing for success require many hours of hard practice. No amount of strength can substitute for the long repetitive sessions that produce a master judoka instead of an average player.

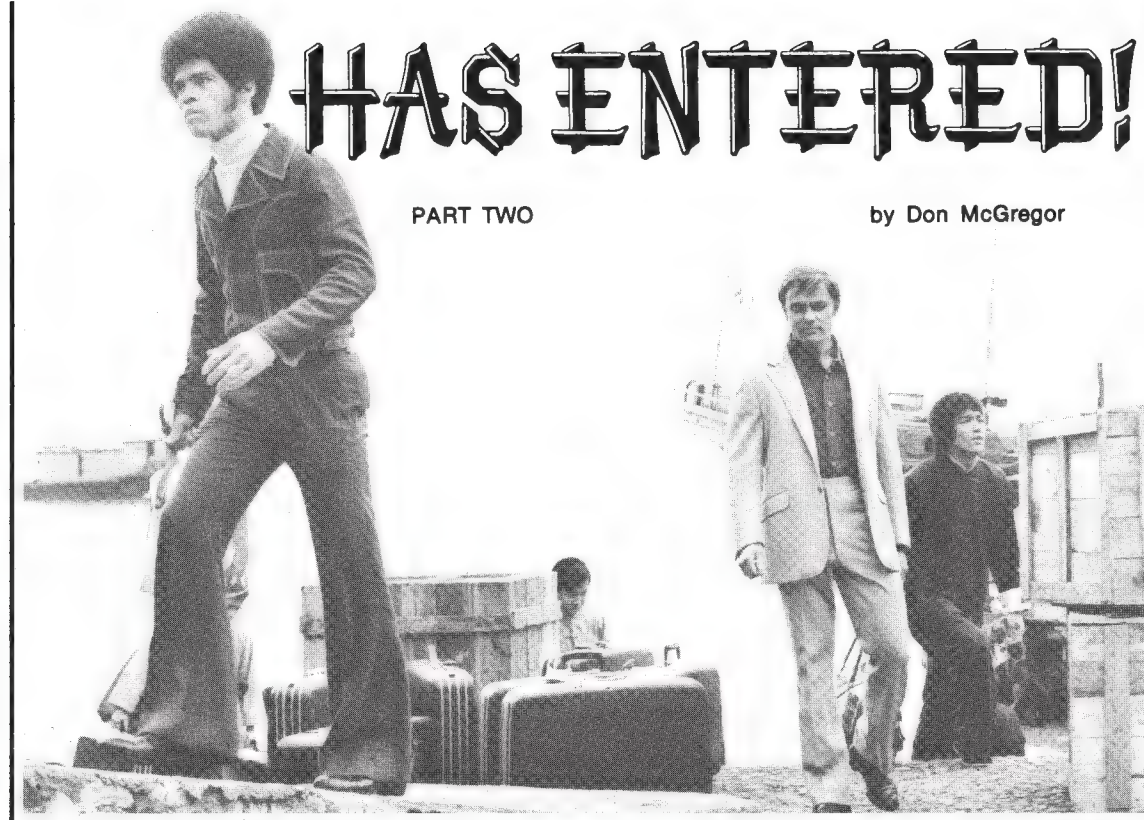
THE DRAGON



HAS ENTERED!

PART TWO

by Don McGregor



The island of Han!

Separated from the mainland by miles of ocean.
Separated from the 20th Century by the decree
of the enigmatic despot... HAN!

The Martial Artists standing on the deck of the
ship that approaches its forbidden terrain are
grimly silent, as if they are all aware that once
they step off this vessel, onto the wharves that
stretch out into the cruel expanse of grey ocean,
they will be totally isolated from the outside
world.

The island of Han!

The center stage for *Bruce Lee's* last film,
ENTER THE DRAGON!

The island of Han!

As Braithwaite, the bureaucratic, stiff-upper-lip,
British governmental agent for some (as usual)
unspecified organization (so you thought the *Man
From U.N.C.L.E.* syndrome had been banished
from our midst, huh?), informs Lee, "This is
where you'll be going. An island fortress, really.
After the war, the nationality of the island was...
uncertain. And, sometime after that, Han bought
it."

"He lives like a King on that island. Totally self-
sufficient. All of his efforts, seemingly, are
directed toward supporting what he calls his
School of Martial Arts. Han's only contact with
the outside world is his tournament, which he
holds every three years."

The island of Han!

All of the scenes in **ENTER THE DRAGON** that
have led up to this approach have been little more
than a prologue, a brisk introduction of the film's
protagonists and antagonists.

The center stage is appropriately set, bizarre in
its furnishings and exotic plants, touched with a
brooding sense of malignancy. The perfect vil-
lain's headquarters. It is more than vaguely
reminiscent of Ian Fleming's *DR. NO* (especially
the book version) with whom Han bears some con-
siderable resemblance. But Fleming's arch villain
had his predecessors (most prominently among
them, *Fu Manchu*); and the island fortress was
one of the mainstays of Saturday Matinee serials
of the 1940s's.

The incredible display of the Martial Arts com-
bat and vengeance that will enact itself upon this
desolate isle, aided by judicious editing, brutal
sound effects, all of which give the battle scenes
—choreographed by Lee himself—the most
maximum action effect.

It works!

And it *is* about to begin!

Lee, Williams, and Roper are led off the ship,
guided by a blonde woman who announces
herself as their guide and hostess. In what is
supposed to be a sultry voice (the *Mata Hari* type),
she tells them her name is Tania. Director *Robert
Clouse* has her slink through the role in *femme
fatale* fashion, one of the many cliché caricatures
in **ENTER THE DRAGON**. Unfortunately, Tania
doesn't quite fit the mold; and is left so unde-
veloped as a character, that she adds little to the
film. She lowers her eyes meaningfully at Roper in
an awkward attempt at a sly-eyed burn; but her
presence lacks the grandiose command that a
Dragon Lady figure requires. One wonders why
Han keeps her around the place.

The paperback version of **ENTER THE DRAGON**

describes Tania as being "outstanding anywhere" and downright irresistibly alluring. She's less so in the movie. The sloe-eyed burns are not only awkward and contrived, but amateurish.

But *John Saxon's* Roper doesn't seem to mind. She's got him under "that old black magic" spell almost before his feet have touched land.

Director *Clouse* wisely cuts to other observers as we get our first glimpse of Bolo, one of Han's training instructors at his vast Martial Arts school. Bolo may not be as impressive an adversary as Han's right hand man, Oharra, but immediately, the tone of what is to come is set as a narrow-eyed Lee sights Bolo watching the artists disembark from the ship. *Lalo Schiffrin* interjects a grim undertone of music at their eye contact.

And then the group moves on! Past Martial Arts training camps, students attired in their Gi's, moving through basic training activities without the usual raucous sound effects splintering the theater house. It is probably the most realistic and authentic representation of Martial Arts technique that the film has, without frills or embellishments.

Of course, for a film of this genre, that's as it should be. But the viewer should be aware that what he is seeing here is basically more of what the true Martial Arts are all about. And that using this kind of ability is less flamboyant, absent from sound effects and glamour; and if, with regret, this physical and spiritual talent must be put into use, it results in damage to the human body that one will not stumble away from during the next 30 seconds of film. Pain lasts, Friends. And some wounds *never* heal. It's something to think about.

If there are any detrimental effects to this kind

of film, and I think there are very few—certainly not worth the kinds of attacks that have laid television low to a new level of blandness—it is that there are some who lose sight of the fact that this is just fantasy. Exciting! Dynamic! Pulse-pounding! Add your own adjectives. And as such, it's exhilarating, pulsing through the blood streams and nerve endings. That's what all the cheering and yelling is about. We've all been oppressed by some one or some thing at some time. And we've all wanted to kick ass at some injustice we've had enacted against us, whether real or imagined. And that's just what the heroes in such films as *ENTER THE DRAGON* do, primarily *Bruce Lee*, who kicks with more style than most of us even imagine ourselves doing.

But remember, there is always an overriding sense of human dignity and respect for life that prompts their anger and violence. And that *is* important to remember. Men with a callous disregard for human life (and don't kid yourself, Friend, there are people like that out there) are nowhere near the kind of men who are great Martial Artists, including *Bruce Lee*. It contradicts basic precepts of the Martial Arts philosophy.

The contestants are led into Han's palace, where they are presented with a royal feast. The set used for Han's royal inner realm is appropriately decorated. Bird cages hang from the ceilings. Waiters bear stretchers upon their shoulders, supporting tanks of water inside of which swim *live lobsters*. Now that's opulence! Sumo wrestlers, jugglers and lovely young ladies supply amusement for the Martial Arts guests.

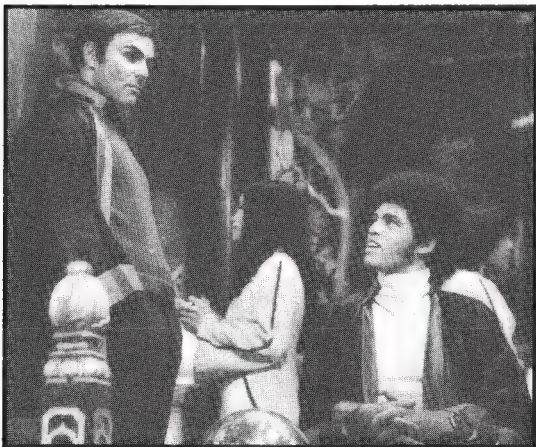
The set was hand-crafted in Hong Kong, and was one of the areas that the American film



makers had difficulties in communication with their Oriental hosts. Language can be a barrier, but more attempts of this type should be made. The end result is an intricate set that looks lavish, an image which is definitely needed to establish believability in Han's wealth and decadence.

Close to three months were spent building the sets and one amusing anecdote recounted by Producer *Weintraub* in *Alex Ben Block's* *THE LEGEND OF BRUCE LEE* tells that the acting profession is regarded with the same disdain as is the ancient profession of prostitution. *Weintraub* ended up having to use many such ladies-of-the-evening to fulfill the required number of parts. To make the matter a bit more ludicrous: with the exception of *Angela Mao-ying's* role as Lee's sister, and Braithwaite's secret agent, Mai Ling (*Patty Chung*)—who has infiltrated Han's quarters as one of his personal hand maidens—all the rest of the ladies in the film play little more than the role of female entertainers for the Martial Arts contestants. The producers probably figured they could mollify the Women's Lib group with *Angela's* *hapkido* performance before she commits suicide. It didn't really work, Guys. Sorry.

Lee, Williams, Roper, the rest of the *budokas*, and Han's other guests partake of the sumptuous feast. But there is an undertone of grimness. Even with the garish decor, Director *Clouse* has kept the mood heavy with impending danger, and screenwriter *Michael Allin* uses the few curt



dialogue scenes in the same manner.

Lee observes everything silently until Roper approaches him. Roper seems to be making a supreme effort to appear relaxed, but old Bruce sees right through that with one or two lines which only add further to Roper's discomfort. As Roper tells Williams when he joins his side, "Why do I have the feeling we're being fattened up for the kill!"

His question is left unanswered.

But the suspicion has been firmly implanted in all our minds. It is quite a bit like that, isn't it?

The tension continues. Lee is still surveying his surroundings. Then his head stops turning, although his face does not alter in expression. We

see Oharra, standing silently, way on the other side of the room. Lee says nothing. For a moment, their eyes connect.

A silent conflict!

Han makes his appearance, followed by six obedient girls. He sits upon his throne and all the entertainment ceases in mid-action. The sumo wrestlers stand in their tiny arena, locked in combat, unmoving while the master surveys his domain.



Han welcomes the contestants with an artificial smile that contains no warmth. *Shih Kien* plays Han with great understatement for the most part, and his mirthless smile gives him a special malevolence. The character is little more than a caricature, but this time it is one that is more successful, due to casting, than the sex symbol role. He tells them the tournaments will begin on the morrow. Before he leaves he gives them a quick performance. His assistants quietly come to the fore, six submissive Oriental girls who have a clever way with razor sharp *shuriken* darts. They use them to pierce pieces of fruit that Han tosses into the air. Their aim is remarkable!

But the last girl, a petite little thing, is the most impressive. She holds the deadly little weapon in the palm of her hand... and waits. Han tosses an apple into the air. The girl merely purses her lips, blowing lightly, and the dart lifts from her hand, moving silently through the air, digging into the dead center of the apple which then drops into Lee's hands!

A bit much, that, but who cares. It's an enjoyable bit, and though it disturbed some Martial Artists as being way too phony, it was a good bit of dramatics. Especially since it introduced Braithwaite's missing agent, Mai Ling!

She has guided the pierced apple right into Lee's hands to let him know she's on his side. Now how she knew he was working for Braithwaite when supposedly she could not get in touch with him, or for that matter he with her, one will never know. But let's allow them that little slip-up.

Han leaves the room with his entourage, and the mundane acts resume. Everyone is impressed. The characters in the film are impressed. We are impressed. Well, maybe everyone isn't impressed. Good old Bruce, with his impenetrable cool, so well calculated and delivered by both Lee and his producers, just takes it all in stride.

The Dragon's got it all down pat. And we know

he ain't gonna swallow no canary! Oharra is gonna be all his.

As this scene ends, it might be worthwhile to note that the sets utilized in *ENTER THE DRAGON* are much more meticulously designed than in most Kung Fu films. It is a visual sign that the film was not merely a rushed "exploitational rip-off" as has happened so often. You've seen enough of the other kung fu flicks to know what I'm talking about, and it's unfortunate that Director *Robert Clouse* and Producers *Fred Weintraub* and *Paul Heller* did not decide to continue in such a vein for their next feature after *DRAGON*. Their recent release, *BLACK BELT JONES*, is without the dramatic virtues of *DRAGON*; and *Jim Kelly*, who appeared so amiable as Williams in *ENTER THE DRAGON*, takes over the lead role in *BLACK BELT JONES*. The studied, super-cool image of Williams (his role was almost as calculated as Lee's) is lost.

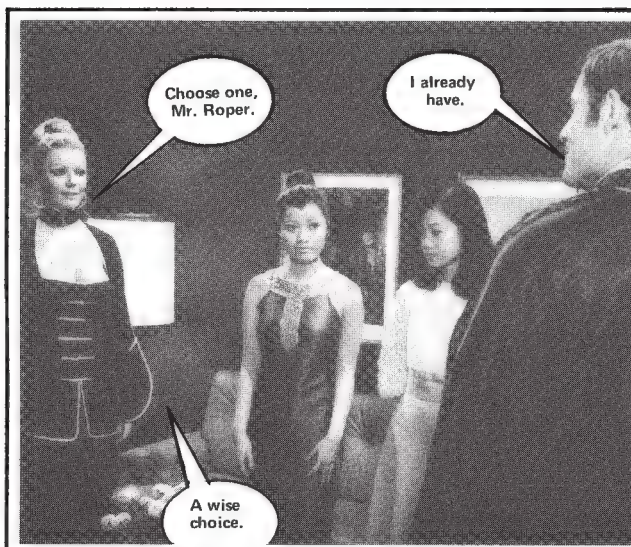
Kelly should not be blamed entirely for this travesty. It is clearly a rushed film, hot on the heels of its predecessor, *DRAGON* but without any of the care, time, or money invested. *BLACK BELT JONES* seems to think it can make its way with three thousand and thirty different styles of groin holds...all of which are supposed to be *humorous*...which is a little hard for anyone to believe...even in fantasy...although, who knows what's going on inside the heads of the grind house circuit or for those dwelling in Lower Slobvitus.

It is also an insulting film in racial terms. Blacks, Italians, WASPS, and Orientals become its targets. Drawling blacks or super cool studs fill the screen; spaghetti slurping Italians provide what is supposed to be ethnic humor. Even those living in Lower Slobvitus should find something degrading about this film.

One wishes that *Clouse*, *Weintraub* and *Heller* could have been content with their money maker, *DRAGON* and spent time and care on the next film they are preparing, *GOLDEN NEEDLES*, putting a few of the profits of the first film into the next to make even a better product. *BLACK BELT JONES* mars their reputation.

I digress from *DRAGON* for just a moment because I think this is an important point for both producers and the audience. Dating back to the old time serials when some producers would use most of their investment in the opening episodes to hook the viewer and then make the end chapters as cheaply as possible. The same thing has happened in many of our entertainment vehicles. They have been used to rip-off the people who love them. And often, if they had put back some portion of the profits of their first picture (as *Saltzman* and *Broccoli* did with the *BOND* films) they come out with a better film, a happier audience and a heftier profit.

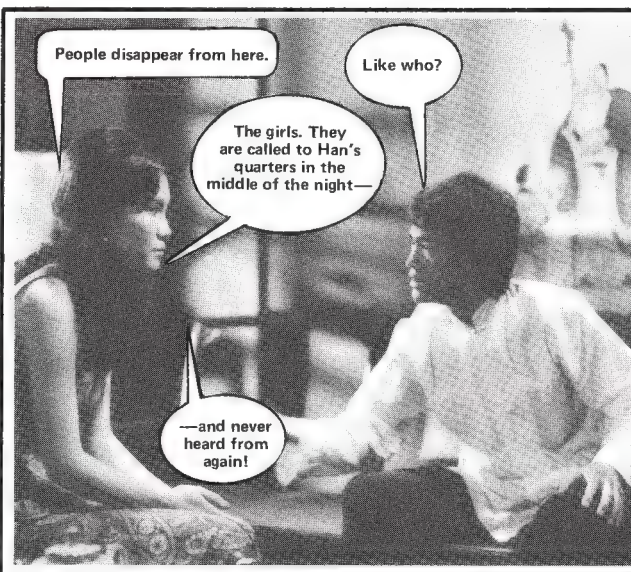
DRAGON has the look of a product that has taken time to craft. The sets are opulent, the musical score is striking (though there are a few moments when *Lalo Schifrin* lapses into his *MISSION IMPOSSIBLE* days); but the major distinction between *ENTER THE DRAGON* and

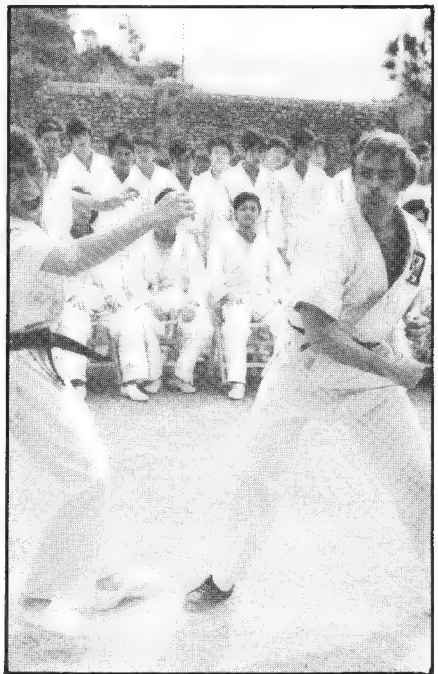
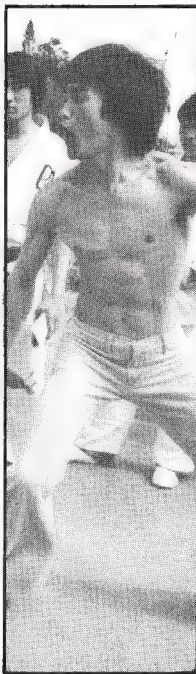
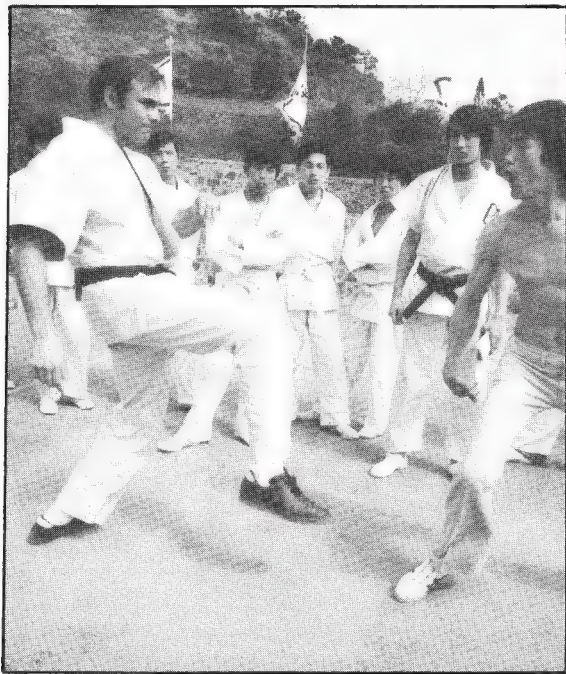


most Kung Fu films is that it involves the audience dramatically, using simple narrative ascension (in other words, building up the suspense). They did not start with the biggest battle first, they led upwards, each time, until *Bruce Lee* puts on one of the greatest action exhibitions on film.

And the action begins at nightfall!

Tania makes the rounds to all the Martial Artists' rooms, offering a selection of girls for "entertainment." Williams decides to make time with no less than five ladies (adding another stereotype to our super cool stud, but this is one you won't find too many arguing against. Dig?). Lee remains aloof here, as he does in his other films, almost giving him a chaste image, much like the heroes of yesteryear. He does ask Tania to bring Mai Ling to his room. Roper takes Tania when it comes his time to choose a play-mate





(what else can you call this entirely chauvinistic ritual); but while he is at play, along with Williams, Lee is talking in hushed tones to Mai Ling.

She tells him that she is a virtual prisoner and that Han is using these tournaments to recruit an army of deadly Martial Artists.

Lee dresses in black, moving like a cat. He glides into the dark, ready to invade the dangers of Han's fortress, and he moves with grace and style, almost effortlessly, blending into shadows when guards approach. He scales immense walls with ease, dropping down on the other side with barely a sound.

He discovers a ventilator duct in one of the gardens. Lifting the plotted plants from a hidden trap door, he uncovers an immense underground operation!

Quickly he takes a knotted rope from his small tote bag, ties it securely and then lowers himself into the abyss!

Real hero stuff.

But while he is hanging there, one of Han's guards discovers the rope topside. Quickly, the guard bends down, drawing a knife and starting to hack away at Lee's lifeline!

Lee—aware of the danger—starts lifting himself as if he were weightless, trying to get back to the top before his foe saws through the rope. Hand over hand he propells himself upwards. Can he reach the top in time?

The guard slices again and again at the rope, and it shreds rapidly. Suddenly, it parts. The lifeline is broken!

He grins, triumphant!

The rope falls into the depths.

Has Lee fallen to his death?

Of course not!

He has already reached the top, hanging just inside the door, and as the guard leans over to check what should be a shattered corpse below, Lee's fist snaps out, whacking into the guard's face. The audience cheers as the guard slams backward and Lee swings effortlessly out of the opening. Now guard after guard rushes him and Lee disposes of them with barely a glance. The guards never have a chance. One after another they are thrown, kicked, slammed to the ground. It's surprising that any of them ever pick themselves up after that mauling, but in these Kung Fu films they usually do. Only to get knocked down again.

Lee makes his escape. Williams, in the meantime, has decided to take a breather from his entertainments, despite the warnings of one of the girls that he should not venture outside. Williams arrogantly walks out into the gardens, doing a few breathing exercises and such. He spots a human fly bounding over the wall into Han's fortress. It is Lee returning, though he cannot recognize the figure due to the night and the distance.

Williams shrugs the incident off, but we know that this portends further danger. Screenwriter *Allin* has structured *DRAGON* with many time-proven formulas, and he has done so with skill. The accused man mistaken for someone else's crimes has a powerful effect upon an audience. Again, it is a fear and emotion that we have felt at some time in our own lives.

Little more is made of the incident at this point, but the next morning as Lee is practicing movements within his room, the door opens behind him.

It is Oharra.

Oharra! The sadist who is responsible for his sister's death.

And Oharra speaks his first and only lines. Sullenly, he tells Lee it is time to appear on the grounds. Lee, in the middle of a movement, turns slowly on one leg, the other still lifted, and glares at Oharra. The moment lingers. Lingers. Then, Oharra turns and leaves and as soon as the door closes we see Lee's face twist into rage, screaming, striking out and shattering the wall. We know that that inanimate object will soon become Oharra.

Lee joins the ceremonies. Han sits overlooking the tournament grounds. Rows upon rows of men stand there, attired in their Gis. Han looks at them with the eyes of a Monarch before he speaks. The girls, Mai Ling and Tania, stand nearby.

Han is displeased that one of his guests saw fit to take advantage of his hospitality last night and invade his private grounds. The guards who picked themselves up off the ground last night now standing meekly before him, ready for sentencing since they failed to whip our boy. Han orders Bolo (Yang Sze) to dispose of the incompetents.

And he does.

Each one dies under Bolo's brutal hands. The last guard is perhaps the most real figure in the entire movie. He watches each of his companions succumb to Bolo's strength, and with a frantic effort he tries to run for safety. He is the only figure in the entire film who watches some guy take out a whole bunch of others and then realizes that he wants no part of that.

He doesn't have a chance. There is no escape!

The sequences are brutal and violent—in direct opposition to the flashy action we witnessed Bruce dish out the night before. Yet, even though the snapping of the last guard's neck and vertebrae is a horrendous act, Bolo still remains the third villain. Han and Oharra have first and second place, respectively.

The tournaments begin and director *Clouse* lightens the mood as Williams and Roper go through their paces. Roper, always the gambler, gets Williams to act as a shill for him, taking several falls the way a hustler will lose the first few games. With each fall, he checks to see if Williams has made the bet for him, but Williams is enjoying his old friend's discomfort and holds it off as long as possible.

Roper is facing the Korean that Lee shamed while traveling toward Han's island and, when Williams finally does make the bet, the Korean goes down to defeat once more.

But then, the battle we have been waiting for begins.

Oharra and Lee!

Silently Oharra walks out into the arena. Lee waits for him, unmoving. Oharra jabs at some boards in a display of strength and the boards shatter.

Confidently, Oharra turns back to Lee.

Lee stands his ground and in best hero tradition speaks a slow and distinct one-liner that is a supreme challenge. Nice show.

Unimpressed with Oharra's act, without any change of emotion on his face, Lee says, "Boards . . . don't hit back!"

The challenge has been hurled!

Oharra studies Lee now, trying to read his foe's

face. There is little there to read but we dissolve into the flashback, seeing Lee's sister plunge that glass into her stomach.

The back of the two men's hands touch now as they assume the starting position for the match. This is the battle we've been waiting for.

The crowd watches. The audience watches.

And when it happens, when Lee finally moves, damn if we don't almost miss it! That is how quickly Lee's hand moves from the back of Oharra's hand and whacks him across the face, knocking him right off his feet. Oharra hasn't even had a chance to make a move!

The crowd applauds. The audience grins, expectantly. There's more to come than this. We all know that! We'll save *our* applause! Somehow, we know, instinctively, on a gut level, that much more spectacular stunts are to come.

Oharra stands. We have the feeling that he is amazed and rapidly gaining respect for his opponent.

In slow motion, we watch the backs of those hands touch again. Again, the crowd watches. Again, the audience watches.

Damn if we don't almost miss it again! Lee utilizes the same effect, yet it is so stunningly quick, we are once more taken off guard. Oharra is back on the ground, probably trying to figure out what in hell is happening here.

The crowd applauds. The audience edges forward.

Oharra stands for a third time. Lee stands before him, dancing before him, moving fluidly, his body like that of a serpent coiling to strike. The movements are fun to watch and are, perhaps, one more instance of the mystique that Lee was

creating as a screen hero. The others might have won, but what other moved so confidently, with so much assurance? None of them!

And none of them pull this next incredible stunt. Lee's pacing in this fight scene is superb. The choreography is beautiful.

Oharra is wary now. The hands touch for a third time. Oharra is ready to guard his head. Lee feints to hit high, catches Oharra low, spilling him once more to the ground. In frustration, Oharra clutches at Lee's leg, trying to smash him to the ground.

What occurs next seems virtually impossible. One sees no trampoline in evidence or any other device to aid Lee in an amazing stunt that is stunt work and show biz at its best.

Oharra twists at Lee's leg, but the Dragon does not fall. It is the first time he really lets us see his flame in the film. Before, he has been competent and efficient; but the depths of his talent have been hidden. Not any longer!

In one fluid moment, Lee flips into the air, spinning into a complete circle to land back on his feet, once more facing his opponent. But Oharra, during that little exhibition, has been kicked savagely in the face, *while* Lee was somersaulting!

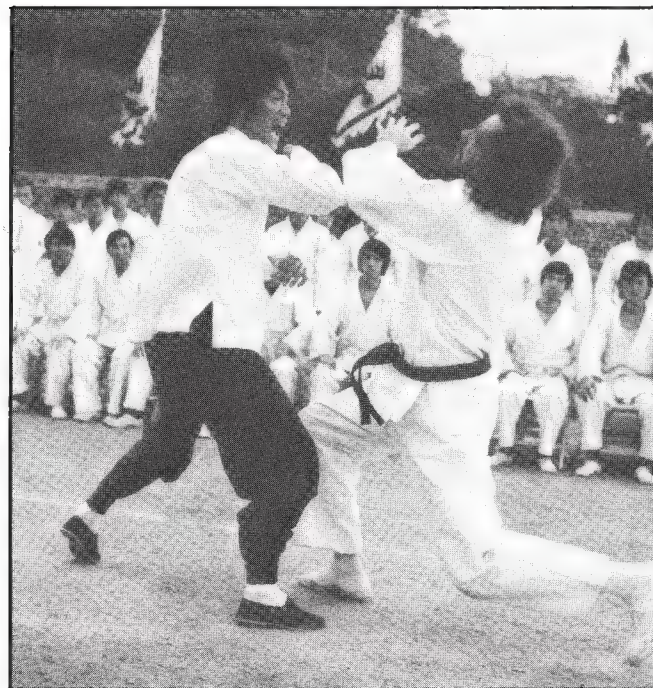
It is at that point in time, that one wishes there were instant replay in movies.

And the battle has just begun. The Dragon has only given us a glimpse of his flame!

There is more to it than that.

Much more!

To be concluded . . .



SHANG-CHI, MASTER OF KUNG FU!

WEB OF BLEEDING VIPERS!

"THERE IS *MUCH* I DO NOT KNOW...
AND IT CAUSES ME GREAT PAIN.

"BUT THIS PAIN IS THE FIRST
STEP TO *FURTHER KNOWL-
EDGE*. FOR IF I THOUGHT,
PAINLESSLY, THAT *ALL*
KNOWLEDGE WERE MINE
TO *COMMAND*...WOULD I
NOT STOP SEEKING *MORE*?

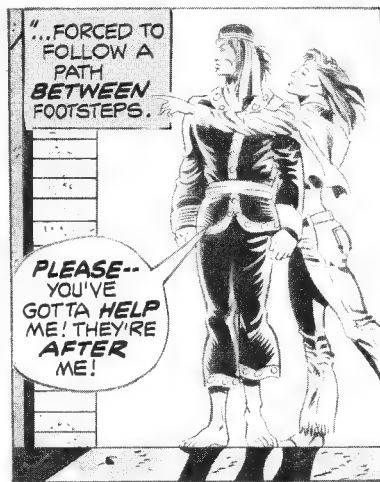
"IF ALL KNOWLEDGE WERE MINE TO
COMMAND, WOULD I HAVE COME
HERE SEEKING THE PEACE OF MY
PAST...ONLY TO FIND THE UNCERTAIN-
TY AND ANXIETY OF THE *PRESENT*?

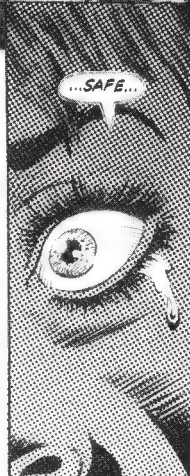
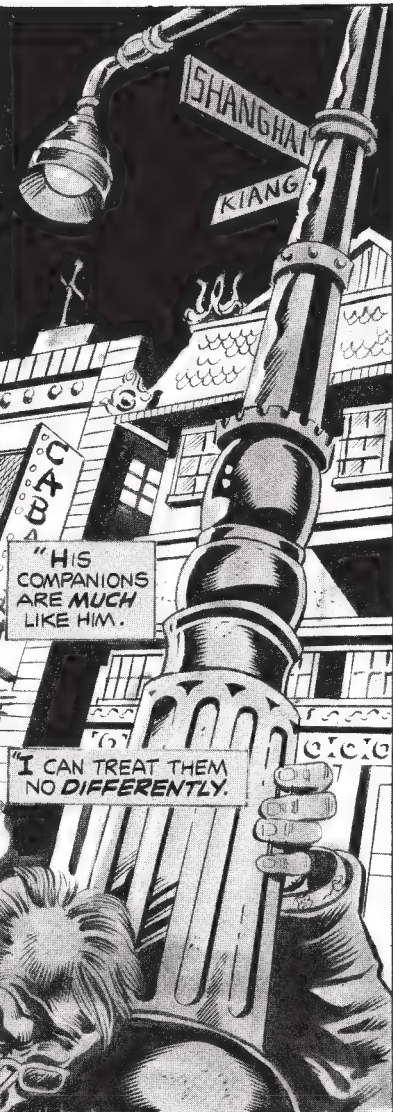
"I HAVE LEARNED A
TRUTH: THE
CLEANSING SERENITY
OF *HONAN*, A
CHILDHOOD
AWAY...IS NOT TO
BE FOUND IN THE
SQUALID BUSTLE
OF THIS PLACE
CALLED *CHINA-
TOWN*, A MERE
SUBWAY RIDE
AWAY.

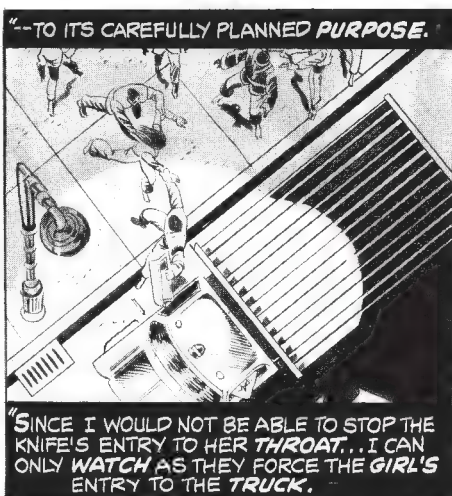
"AND I AM REMINDED OF A *GREATER TRUTH*, ONE I HAVE
ALWAYS KNOWN...BUT HAVE ATTEMPTED TO *DENY*. PEACE
CANNOT BE ATTAINED BY WALKING *ANY* GROUND, WHETHER
THE SOFT EARTH OF *HONAN* OR THE HARD CONCRETE OF
NEW YORK.

"IT IS FOUND *ONLY*...WITHIN.

WRITER: DOUG MOENCH
ARTISTS: PAUL GULACY,
and AL MILGROM





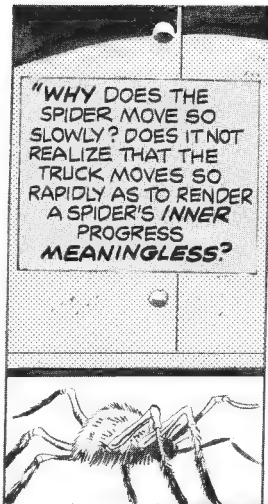




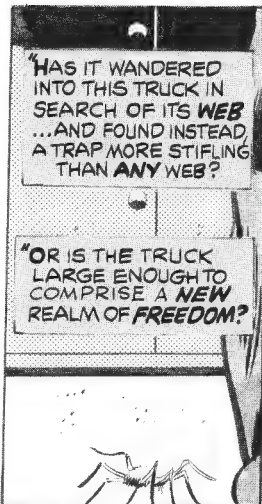
"THE TRUCK BEGINS TO MOVE..."

"I THINK..."

"...AND A THING OF BEAUTY FILLS MY THOUGHTS."

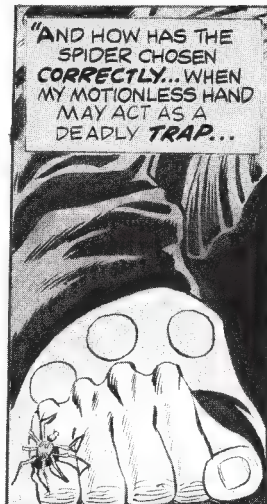


"WHY DOES THE SPIDER MOVE SO SLOWLY? DOES IT NOT REALIZE THAT THE TRUCK MOVES SO RAPIDLY AS TO RENDER A SPIDER'S INNER PROGRESS MEANINGLESS?"



"HAS IT WANDERED INTO THIS TRUCK IN SEARCH OF ITS WEB ...AND FOUND INSTEAD, A TRAP MORE STIFLING THAN ANY WEB?"

"OR IS THE TRUCK LARGE ENOUGH TO COMPRISE A NEW REALM OF FREEDOM?"



"AND HOW HAS THE SPIDER CHOSEN CORRECTLY... WHEN MY MOTIONLESS HAND MAY ACT AS A DEADLY TRAP..."



"...OR A PLATFORM OF COMFORT..?"



"THE TRUCK STOPS... BUT THE VOICES PROVIDE NO ANSWERS.."



GET THE GIRL INSIDE--AND LEAVE THE FREAK LOCKED IN THE BACK UNTIL THE ADDER DECIDES WHAT TO DO WITH HIM.

"I LOOK AT THE SPIDER, AND WONDER... IS THIS TRUCK MY WEB, OR DOES IT TRANSPORT ME TO A MORE FORMIDABLE TRAP...?"

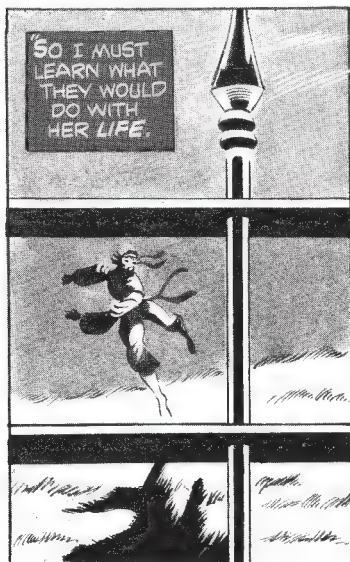


"...WHERE I MAY RELEASE IT..."

HAI-YAH!

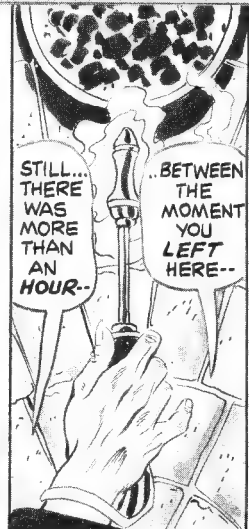


"...AND MYSELF."

















"...SUMMONING FOUR OTHERS, THAT HE MAY FURTHER REFRAIN FROM BATTLE.



"THE DISCIPLINE OF MY YOUTH PREACHED THAT WHILE SKILL WITH WEAPONS IS POSSIBLE TO ATTAIN---

"--IT IS MERELY A CRUTCH... TO OVERCOME A LACK OF SKILL IN THE FUNDAMENTAL MARTIAL ARTS...



SWSSSSSS

"...FUNDAMENTAL ARTS WHICH NOT ONLY RENDER WEAPONS UNNECESSARY--



"--BUT--

CHANK!



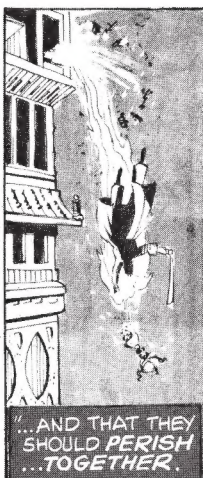
"--A HINDRANCE AS WELL.

PLUD!





IT IS *JUST*, THEN, THAT HIS *HATE* SHOULD ONCE MORE *UNITE* WITH THE VESSEL OF HIS *CRUELTY*...



...AND THAT THEY SHOULD *PERISH* ...TOGETHER.



"THE GIRL'S BONDS PART EASILY."

WHY DID THIS MAN WISH YOU HARM?

"MY NAME IS *LINDA FONG*. THE MAN YOU JUST KILLED WAS KNOWN AS *THE ADDER*--THE *WEALTHIEST* MAN IN *CHINA-TOWN*, PERHAPS IN ALL OF *NEW YORK*. HE GOT BOTH HIS *MONEY* AND HIS *NAME* BY SPREADING *VENOM* THROUGH *CHINATOWN* AND *HARLEM*.

"HIS *VENOM* WAS *OPIMUM...HEROIN...* THE *POPPY*. TODAY I *DISCOVERED* THAT. AND I *ALSO* *DISCOVERED* THAT *ROBERT FONG*, MY *FATHER*, HAD *TWO NAMES*. TODAY, I *LEARNED* THAT MY *FATHER* WAS *THE ADDER*."

"I *LEARNED* THAT HE WOULD *RATHER KILL ME*--HIS *DAUGHTER*--THAN *LOSE* THE *MONEY* HE HAD GOTTEN BY DEALING *DRUGS* AND *MISERY*."



NO YOU *DON'T* SEE!

HOW CAN *YOU* UNDERSTAND?



HOW CAN *YOU* KNOW WHAT IT'S *LIKE* --

--TO *LEARN* THAT YOUR *FATHER* IS *EVIL*?

"I HAVE *SOUGHT* TODAY MY *PAST*... I HAVE *FOUND* THAT FOR THE *SON OF FU MANCHU*, THE *PAST* IS *BEST*... *FORGOTTEN*."

FIN



ENTER THE LETTERS



The letters printed here are comments on our fabulous first issue, which (no surprise to us) was a colossal success... in fact, we received more mail on **THE DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU #1** than on almost any other Marvelous magazine for that month! Read on...

Gentlemen Editors and Karatakas:

THE DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU is a smash hit. Congratulations. The cover by Adams is one of the best he's done, and that's none other than Bruce Lee on front.

I have many things to say about the book, almost all of them totally good. The Shang-Chi story! excellent. Beautiful visuals by the one man I'd desert Barry Smith for. All that Steve Englehart wrote impressed me tremendously—he is really a highly entertaining writer.

The Martial Arts section was both well-written and accurate. (I hold a yellowbelt in *kyokushinkaitan*, which is halfway between nothing and everything. And I remember my first few lessons—ouch!) All the technical articles were correct, as far as I could tell, and the book was done with a terrific lack of blatant exploitation, which causes me to appreciate it all the more.

One comment on the "Sons of the Tiger" segment. Change writers. Conway's about as tactful and moving as the punchline to a bad joke. Otherwise, the art was good.

On the whole, I think that among all newcomers this year, **DEADLY HANDS** will stand out. It's just that damn good.

Steve Clement
15 Campbell Terrace
Pawtucket, RI 02860

You aren't alone in your feelings, Steve. Judging from the response to our first black-and-white venture into the world of flashing fists and flying feet, *Marveldom Assembled* stands with you. An item worthy of interest is the number of letters we received from *both* Martial Arts students and instructors—and we're glad you found that section accurate, Steve. Keep hangin' around, 'cause you ain't seen nothin' yet!

Dear Marvelites,

THE DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU—great mag! Good stories and great in-depth articles on Bruce Lee, David Carradine, and "Five Fingers of Death"! One thing at a time:

"Shang-Chi, Master of Kung Fu." Nice story plot, and the artwork—beautiful as usual. But he didn't look 14 years of age.

"Heroes Don't Die"—one of the best in-depth biographies of Bruce Lee ever to grace my scrapbook. Good photos, too!

Nice story on David Carradine and his pilot film that influenced TV's "Kung Fu." Great! Really great articles!

The editorials were good, too. Good show, Roy and Marv. And a hand for David Warner on "Films of Fury." Now for the new comic strip—

"Sons of the Tiger." Fantastic! Encore! Bravo! Good story plot (reminiscent of "Enter the Dragon")... but one little mistake. Earlier in the story there is an emblem on their uniforms—I guess they're Tiger Eyes. But later on it becomes the yin/yang sign.

Jonathan Yard, Jr.
44 Sumner Avenue #2C
Brooklyn, NY 11206

We hate to admit it, Jonathan, but you caught us red-handed. Sheesh! Things are so hectic around the *Marvel bullpen* that even with two assistant editors pouring over each story to watch for boners like that, it slipped by us! Actually, the *Sons of the Tiger* were originally drawn with that yin/yang symbol, but to avoid confusion with Shang-Chi, who already sports said symbol—they were redrawn as Tiger Eyes (at least, *most* of them were).



Dear Mr. Thomas,

I recently picked up **DEADLY HANDS #1**; previously, I had read the first three issues of the **MASTER OF KUNG FU** color comic. Jim Starlin is one of your best artists, just fantastic!

I have just one complaint—too much written material. I am not a fan of Kung Fu movies, I am a fan of Kung Fu comics. I don't mind maybe two or three articles, but five are too many. I hope in the future to see less articles and more art.

Lorenz Menrath
831 Liberty Road
Petaluma, Ca. 94952

As you can see from the "Readers' Poll," Lorenz, the article about Bruce Lee placed first—although, for awhile, it looked as if there might be a tie for first place. We're trying to produce a balanced package, and if the enthusiastic approval of your fellow Kung Fu fans means anything, we're doing a good job. Please be patient with those of us who enjoy both types of Martial Arts material, and we think you'll be amply rewarded with the impressive exploits of Shang-Chi and the Sons of the Tigers!

READERS' FORUM

Frankly speaking, your features are like snippets of "Black Belt," "Fighting Stars" and "Karate Illustrated," except that you're inexperienced and in it for the entertainment rather than straight factual value. Fine, fine, except that people trust you.

I have no doubt that Marvel has greater impact on the minds of more people than any of the magazines I mentioned and you can do, innocently, a great deal of damage with a miasmic presentation of Kung Fu. So please, be careful—do your homework, have somebody do careful research, and perhaps use the text section to at last give us a glimpse of the true nature of Martial Arts.

Charles R. Stone
310 Columbus, Room 70
San Francisco, CA 94133

Marvel isn't exactly *inexperienced* in putting together a magazine, Charles, although we are reasonably new to Kung Fu and the Martial Arts. However, we realize our responsibility, and we're doing our best to bring you the most accurate magazine we can possibly publish. In good part—as witness the letters from various instructors on these pages—we've succeeded, yet there's always room for improvement. We appreciate your concern.

Dear Sirs,

I wish to congratulate you on your new publication, **THE DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU**. I found your articles very interesting and well illustrated. You have well portrayed the many-faced dragon that embodies the Martial Arts.

Your serials "Shang-Chi" and "Sons of the Tiger" are very interesting—the techniques that are illustrated are amazingly accurate, as are the weapons. My compliments to your artists. Shang-Chi is similar to many Hong Kong comic heroes, however he replaces their gore with technique and artistry. My heartfelt thanks for leaving the blood of villains primarily in their veins.

I wish to comment on Wan Chang O'Shaugnessy's article, "What to Do Till the Sensei Comes." The pictures illustrate basic Kung Fu technique, yet the term *sensei* is used. This refers to instructors of Judo, primarily Karate. *Sifu* is the proper term for a Kung Fu instructor. Also, the term *dojo* refers to a school of Judo or Karate; a school of Kung Fu is called a *kwoon*.

Concerning the body of his article, I must take offense. I've spent 12 years in the Martial Arts, and for the last two I have held a *sifu* rank in Kung Fu and I now run my own school. No instructor of merit would work a *Tod dai* (new student) as hard as he implies. Steel tempered too rapidly becomes brittle, not hard. The methods of one instructor should not be allowed to make all of us seem impossible task masters.

Donald E. Glidden
68 Jefferson Street
Bangor, Me. 04401

We stand corrected, Don, and appreciate your cogent comments on Kung Fu. However, we can't help but notice that you didn't find fault with the *actual* methods portrayed in the article, just with the mix-up of a few terms and the implication of hard early training, which as you say, differs with the instructor. We must be doing something right, mustn't we? (No, don't answer that!)



Dear Roy and Marv,

"Shang-Chi, Master of Kung Fu" didn't really contain much of a story per se, but for an introductory transition story from the color comic, it wasn't bad. Starlin and Milgrom reproduce better in black-and-white art.

"Sons of the Tiger" was very good. I almost prefer it over Shang-Chi because of the action, storyline and characters. This was the finest job Dick Giordano has done for your black-and-white books to date.

The text features made for interesting reading, but since Iron Fist is now appearing in color comics, couldn't he appear in a second series here, too? After all, his adventures certainly fit the mold of this magazine, and you'd be covering the Martial Arts from almost every angle.

DEADLY HANDS is a quality magazine in the Might Marvel tradition. Best regards, especially to good ol' Wan Chang O'Shaugnessy.

Dave Kalis
7570 Byron Place
Clayton, Mo. 63105

Wan Chang returns your compliments, Dave. And about Iron Fist—we have some very definite plans in mind, which will be revealed any day now, so keep watchin' our magazines for an announcement. In the meantime, **DEADLY HANDS** and our color Kung Fu comics oughta keep you going, right? And if you're a true Martial Arts fan, *don't* miss our next issue, or you'll hate yourself forever.

Dear Sir:

I found your mag quite well set up, easy to read and with good pictures. I'd like to see more of your feature articles on Martial Arts; I've studied Korean karate, Kung Fu, Judo and akido for 10 years and am a 3rd Degree. I also teach, and all 28 of my students bought **DEADLY HANDS**, so keep it up!

John Miller, Jr.
2007 Lindy Avenue
Lawton, Ok. 75301

Whew! You're *our* kind of reader, John. And remember, people, you don't have to be a Kung Fu expert to read our magazine, but it helps! (What did we mean by that? Who knows?) Watch Marvel for the best in the old and new concepts, as we march ahead in 1974. See you *next* issue.

READERS' POLL

It had to happen...

1) "Heroes Don't Die" by Lorraine Zenka-Smith. The immortal Bruce Lee's biography finished first, and hot on its heels...

2) "Shang-Chi: MASTER OF KUNG FU" by Steve Englehart, Jim Starlin and Al Milgrom—the first magazine episode of the son of Fu Manchu!

3) "The Sons of the Tiger" by Gerry Conway and Dick Giordano... the start of a new series.

4) "...The Click of the Neilsens" by John David Warner, an article on the pilot film for TV's "Kung Fu"... followed by another Caine article—

5) "What's Right with Kung Fu" by Wan Chang O'Shaugnessy.

6) **UNDER THE PAGODA**: "Films of Fury" by John David Warner, a look at the Martial Arts Flicks...

7) "Catching a Killer Red-Handed" again by John David Warner, a review of "Five Fingers of Death."

8) "What to Do Till the Sensei Comes" by the indomitable Wan Chang O'Shaugnessy—practical advice on the Martial Arts.

There you have it. Now let us have it. Send all comments to:

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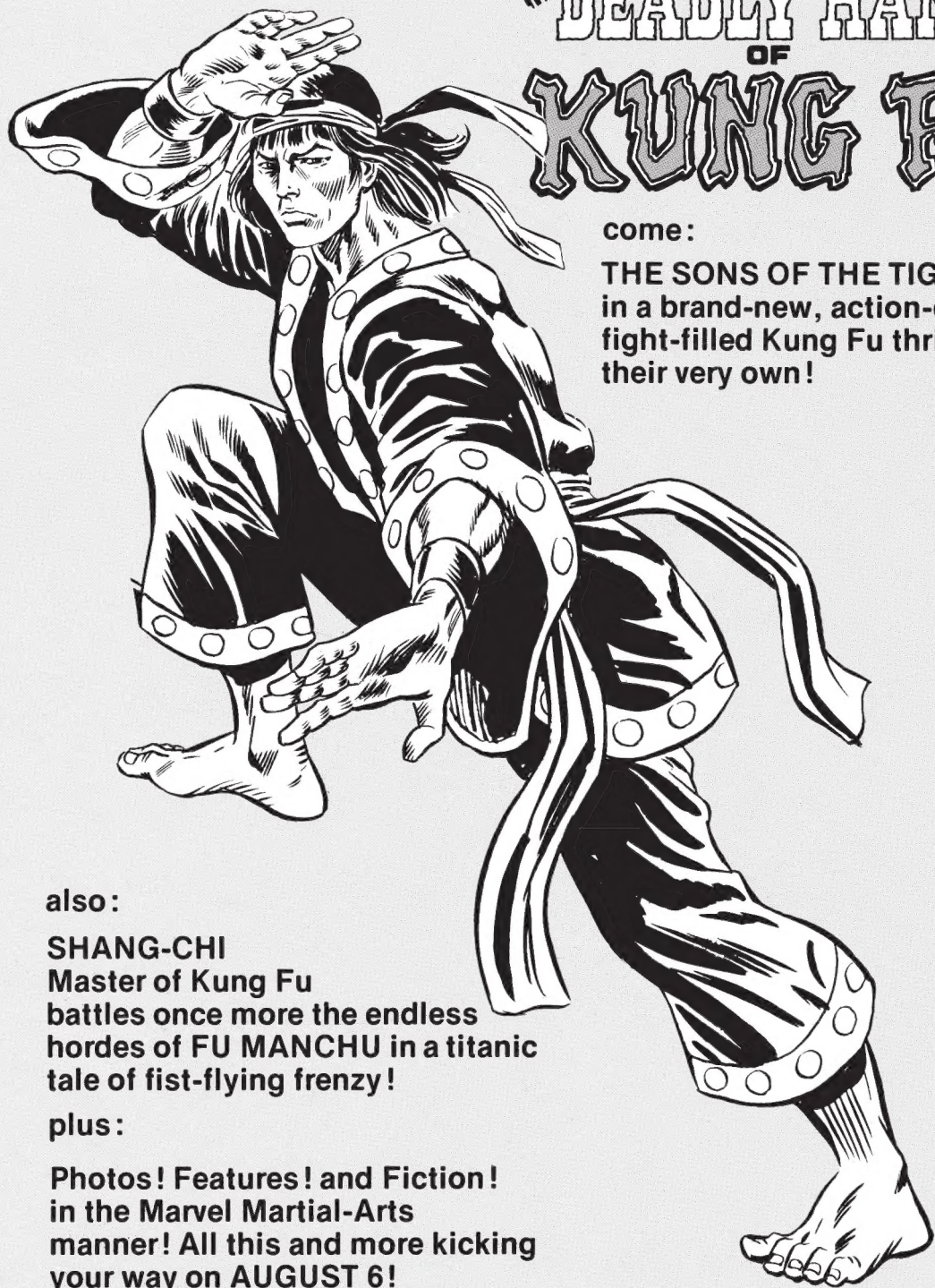
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Shadowcat

